

Good & Evil

A Selection of Passages
From The Teachings of
J. Krishnamurti

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Foreword

The passages in this volume have been directly copied from books by Krishnamurti. These books include public talks, questions and answers, conversations and writings.

Krishnamurti always spoke from such a large perspective that his whole vision was implied in any extended passage. But if one wishes to see how a statement flows out of his whole discourse, one can find the context by referring to the book indicated. So doing may be invaluable for deeper comprehension of the passages.

In the bibliography at the end of the volume we give dates and publishers of the books where the quoted texts may be found. Some of the books were printed in more than one edition in the United States and abroad, as well as both in hardback and paper. The page numbers we give may differ in the various editions.

Talking things over together as two friends...

In a few days we are going to have discussions, and we can start those discussions this morning. But if you assert and I assert, if you stick to your opinion, to your dogma, to your experience, to your knowledge, and I stick to mine, then there can be no real discussion because neither of us is free to inquire. To discuss is not to share our experiences with each other. There is no sharing at all; there is only the beauty of truth, which neither you nor I can possess. It is simply there.

To discuss intelligently, there must also be a quality not only of affection but of hesitation. You know, unless you hesitate, you can't inquire. Inquiry means hesitating, finding out for yourself, discovering step by step; and when you do that, then you need not follow anybody, you need not ask for correction or for confirmation of your discovery. But all this demands a great deal of intelligence and sensitivity.

By saying that, I hope I have not stopped you from asking questions! You know, this is like talking things over together as two friends. We are neither asserting nor seeking to dominate each other, but each is talking easily, affably, in an atmosphere of friendly companionship, trying to discover. And in that state of mind we do discover, but I assure you, what we discover has very little importance. The important thing is to discover, and after discovering, to keep going. It is detrimental to stay with what you have discovered, for then your mind is closed, finished. But if you die to what you have discovered the moment you have discovered it, then you can flow like the stream, like a river that has an abundance of water.

Saanen, 10th Public Talk, 1st August 1965

The good is not the opposite of the evil...

The good is not the opposite of the evil. It has never been touched by that which is evil, though it is surrounded by it. Evil cannot hurt the good but the good may appear to do harm and so evil gets more cunning, more mischievous. It can be cultivated, sharpened, expansively violent; it is born within the movement of time, nurtured and skillfully used. But goodness is not of time; it

can in no way be cultivated or nurtured by thought; its action is not visible; it has no cause and so no effect. Evil cannot become good for that which is good is not the product of thought; it lies beyond thought, like beauty. The thing that thought produces, thought can undo, but it is not the good; as it is not of time, the good has no abiding place. Where the good is, there is order, not the order of authority, punishment and reward; this order is essential, for otherwise society destroys itself and man becomes evil, murderous, corrupt and degenerate. For man is society; they are inseparable. The law of the good is everlasting, unchanging and timeless. Stability is its nature and so it is utterly secure. There is no other security.

Krishnamurti's Journal, pp. 93-94

You will never understand anything by thinking in terms of its opposite...

Not only at the present time, but always, the fundamental truth is that man divides himself by beliefs, by systems. As nationalism divides human beings, beliefs break up friendship and create animosity. At the present time, when the world is in such a frightful chaos, when all the values have disintegrated, when the so-called democracies are also leading up to regimentation, surely those who have thought about the cause of the misery and the antagonism that exists, should attempt to bring about a new society and not merely the reconstruction of the old, because the old cannot be patched up and even if it is patched up it will remain still the old.

As wisdom comes only with the knowledge of our everyday activities and feelings, we shall today take up the study of "evil" as a means of revealing the process of our own thinking. 'Evil' is a predominant factor in our daily life. All ideas are interrelated, and by examining one profoundly and following it through, you will see how extraordinarily interrelated they are.

Various philosophers in Europe and in this country and various religions have thought over this problem of evil. Great men have given their life over to its study. But, you readily throw off explanations without any thinking. Let us inquire into this like mature people and understand its implications and its significance, so that we may be able to alter the conduct of our daily life.

It is no use thinking about 'evil' according to what is written about it in books or translating it according to our experience. Our experience is itself "accumulated memory" which is always translating through the screen of personal advantages and gains. To understand a problem of enormous significance, like evil, your mind must be in a receptive mood. Just as the problem of labor cannot be understood if you approach it merely as a capitalist, or as a socialist, or a laborman, so also to understand the problem of evil, you must not approach it from any single point, such as a sense of guilt, personal experience, selfishness, etc.

You say that whatever hinders progress is evil. What is progress, what is evolution? The cart-wheel has progressed to the airplane; the germ has become the child. We have progressed from the age of the arrow to that of the atomic bomb. Now, we have more breaking up of people than ever, more armies, more national feeling, more fear and more starvation. People have become more greedy and more cunning in a cunning society and more competitive in a competitive society. In spite of the havoc and misery caused by the two world wars, many persons consider that war is inevitable and, in the nature of things, is a means to peace. Is all this progress?

We have to consider progress as a means of human happiness, i.e., as progress towards human love, consideration, generosity and charity. Have we evolved psychologically towards freedom and happiness? There is more and more deterioration all around—tyranny, dictatorship, diseases, starvation, hatred, wars and confusion.

You say that God has a plan and anything that interferes with that plan is evil. This is the old idea of a fight between God and the Devil.

Look about you, and see what is happening in nature. One bird destroys another bird, one animal leaps on another, the snake lives by its poison and the strong live on the weak. There is continual strife to live by any means. The snake is the most extraordinary animal developing its own poison for its self-protection. There is a kind of snake in Brazil which, to protect itself, becomes rigid like a bar of steel and cannot be bent. Perhaps a snake is not cruel or evil at all. We call a snake evil and kill it. Among us, the strong live on the weak, the clever live on the stupid. The capitalist is hoarding money and property at the expense of others. The books have said that they are evil, and yet we are doing that.

Inwardly, there is a battle between the opposites, between what I want and what I do not want. I am brutal and greedy and I do not want to be brutal and greedy.

We also want to survive physically as a person and also psychologically as the name, as an idea, etc.

Our everyday existence is confusion, ignorance, sorrow, pleasure, a constant battle, a constant strife. Has evil any relationship to this battle in us between the opposites or is it like death, like god, like truth, something apart from this everyday existence?

Is 'evil' an idea which is used by the society to control man so that he does not go beyond the limits? Organized religions have cultivated and controlled man by their laws through fear, through compulsion, through imitation, through fears of contradiction and have said 'You must be this'.

When you go beyond those laws, they say it is evil. For instance, organized religion has never said that ambition is evil, but has always decried sex. Don't you see the implications?

Does evil mean to you a conquering of some temptation? Buddha is supposed to have fought with "Mara" and won. Jesus is supposed to have been tempted by the devil and conquered it. Perhaps, we are thinking altogether wrongly, when we have the idea that there are evil forces in the world, the dark forces in opposition to the white forces.

So, to understand this, you must begin with yourself. You do something wrong and you have pain. There is a physiological suffering and a psychological suffering; they are not quite clear-cut. What is the cause of this suffering? Is it easily dissolved?

We need food, clothing and shelter. If I am satisfied with a few clothes, food and shelter, I will never come into conflict with another; but, if I use food, clothing and shelter as a means of psychological exploitation, I will come into conflict.

Some of you advocated suffering as a means to acquire intelligence. Is one to cultivate intelligence through suffering? Is not suffering an indication of ignorance? I suffer when my son dies, because I do not understand the implications of death. Do I sit down and find out the cause of suffering, or do I run away to seek relief from pain with the aid of a priest? If I want to go into the whole significance of death I must have intelligence. You say ignorance is a means of enlightenment; that is, suffer more and more, and you will become more and more intelligent. Do you become intelligent in that manner? Surely you will get intelligence only through understanding suffering, and not through mere suffering. So, when you say suffering brings intelligence it is not a fact. Through ignorance there can be nothing but ignorance. Through wrong means you have only a wrong end.

As you have been constantly seeking escapes from suffering, you have become clever and intelligent in escapes; but you have not understood suffering. To understand suffering, you have to live with it. To find the cause of suffering, you must go into it and not reject suffering. Understanding will come only when you give your whole being to understand the problem. Is evil the denial of good? By denying evil, do you understand evil? To understand anything there must not be denial, nor condemnation, nor identification with it. Take, for example, God. I am not talking about what the books say or about the images in temples; that is not God. God is an unknown thing and therefore you must go to it with a free mind, without any conclusions or condemnations. So also, evil is not the denial of good. Beauty is not the denial of the ugly.

Is “evil” or “vice” or “the bad” the opposite of the good? Is good the opposite of evil?

Does not each opposite contain the germ of its own opposite? Is fear the opposite of bravery? If I am a coward I want to become brave. In doing so, instead of understanding fear, I have tried to become brave. Therefore, bravery has an element of fear in it.

You say that a man in war is doing his duty; but you forget that he is stuffed with propaganda of all kinds; he is told that his country will suffer, and he is stuffed with rum before he fights. Is this doing his duty? Even in the case of a mother loving her child, either she gives her life to it which is spontaneous, or it may be calculated because without the child, she is lost.

When I am stupid I want to become clever. Is not “becoming clever” a part of stupidity? There is conflict between what I am and the thing which I want to be. The thing which I want to be is part of my own projection of stupidity. If I understood stupidity, then the problem ceases. The very awareness of the fact that I am stupid is the beginning of intelligence, and not trying to become clever. If I think in these terms, there is no opposite at all; the opposite may be a fabrication of the mind.

Has not non-greed the element of greed? When I am greedy positively in going after property, etc., I want to become non-greedy; I am still greedy negatively in going after non-greed. I find greed does not pay and, perhaps if I become non-greedy, it will pay—which is still greed in an

uncreative form. You will never understand anything by thinking in terms of its opposite. Similarly, if I am evil and I try to become good, the good has the seed of evil. Instead of pursuing and creating the opposite, if I say 'All right, I am greedy, it is a fact', then, something happens and I cease to be greedy. The moment I recognize it, it falls away.

Madras, 22nd Group Discussion, 9th December 1947

When the mind is totally aware, alert, watchful, there is no such thing as evil or good; there is only an awakened state...

Question: You have said that total attention is good; what then is evil?

Krishnamurti: I wonder if there is such a thing as evil? Please, give your attention, go with me, let us inquire together. We say there is good and evil. There is envy and love, and we say that envy is evil and love is good. Why do we divide life, calling this good and that bad, thereby creating the conflict of the opposites? Not that there is not envy, hate, brutality in the human mind and heart, an absence of compassion, love; but why do we divide life into the thing called good and the thing called evil? Is there not actually only one thing, which is a mind that is inattentive? Surely, when there is complete attention, that is, when the mind is totally aware, alert, watchful, there is no such thing as evil or good; there is only an awakened state. Goodness then is not a quality, not a virtue, it is a state of love. When there is love there is neither good nor bad. there is only love. When you really love somebody you are not thinking of good or bad, your whole being is filled with that love. It is only when there is the cessation of complete attention, of love, that there comes the conflict between what I am and what I should be. Then that which I am is evil, and that which I should be is the so-called good.

Now, is it at all possible not to think in terms of fragmentation, not to break life up into the good and the evil, not to be caught in this conflict? The conflict of good and evil is the struggle to become something. The moment the mind desires to become something, there must be effort, the conflict between the opposites. This is not a theory. You watch your own mind, and you will see that the moment the mind ceases to think in terms of becoming something, there is a cessation of action which is not stagnation; it is a state of total attention which is goodness, but that total attention is not possible as long as the mind is caught in the effort to become something.

Please do listen, not only to what I am saying, but to the operations of your own mind, and that will reveal to you with what extraordinary persistence thought is striving to become something, everlastingly struggling to be other than it is, which we call discontent. It is this striving to become something that is 'evil', because it is partial attention, it is not total attention. When there is total attention there is no thought of becoming, there is only a state of being. But the moment you ask, 'How am I to arrive at that state of being, how am I to be totally aware?' You have already entered the path of 'evil' because you want to achieve. Whereas, if one merely recognizes that as long as there is becoming, striving, making an effort to be something, one is on the path of 'evil', if one is able to perceive the truth of that, just see the fact as it is, then one will find that that is the state of total attention; and that state is goodness, there is no strife in it.

Bombay, 4th Public Talk, 27th February 1955

It is only possible to be free of this duality when you are completely in contact with the actual fact, with what actually is...

Questioner: Is good and bad merely an idea?

Krishnamurti: Ah—is it just an idea? If you have a toothache, a pain, is it just an idea? Ah—is it?—(laughing)—or is it a natural response. Take another example—is it evil when you are violent—is it just an idea when you hit me, when you kill me? Is it an idea? You may kill me for an idea, which is called nationalism.

One has really to inquire into this question of what is evil and what is good, what is beauty and what is ugliness. When you get angry, violent, envious, greedy, jealous, would you call that evil? When you hurt another by a word, by a gesture, or by throwing a bomb, would you call that evil? But you are doing that all day. And what is it, to be good, to be kind, to be generous and not to create enmity? This dual thing exists in every human being—the good and the bad—the battle is there. That is our battlefield, we want to be peaceful and quiet, affectionate, yet there is the other in us, violent, wanting to hurt. Is it possible completely to be free of this duality? It is only possible to be free of this duality when you are completely in contact with the actual fact, with what actually is. That is to say, when you are violent, not to have its opposite as idea, as ideal, but to be completely aware of the total significance of violence. Then you will find, if you are totally aware of what actually is—whether you call it good or bad—then you will find that there is no duality at all. After all, if beauty is merely the opposite of ugliness, or if love is the opposite of hate, then there is neither beauty nor love. But, with us, love is the opposite of hate; therefore we are always caught in love, jealousy and hate. But when you completely face the fact—be it jealousy, envy, anger, brutality—not creating the opposite as a means of escape from the fact, then you will transcend both the good and the bad and go beyond.

*Talks in Europe 1967, pp. 31-2
2nd Public Talk Paris, 20th April 1967*

Think about it, and you will see that the very practice of non-violence creates violence...

Question: In this world, goodness does not pay. How can we create a society which will encourage goodness?

Krishnamurti: To the intellectuals, 'goodness' is a terrible word, and they generally want to avoid it; but now it is becoming the fashion even among the intellectuals to use that word. And is there goodness when there is a motive behind it? If I have a motive to be good, does that bring about goodness? Or is goodness something entirely devoid of this urge to be good, which is ever based on a motive? Is good the opposite of bad, the opposite of evil? Every opposite contains the seed of its own opposite, does it not? There is greed, and there is the ideal of non-greed. When the mind pursues non-greed, when it tries to be non-greedy, it is still greedy, because it wants to be something. Greed implies desiring, acquiring, expanding; and when the mind sees that it does not pay to be greedy, it wants to be non-greedy, so the motive is still the same, which is to be or

to acquire something. When the mind wants not to want, the root of want, of desire, is still there. So goodness is not the opposite of evil; it is a totally different state. And what is that state?

Obviously, goodness has no motive, because all motive is based on the self, it is the egocentric movement of the mind. So what do we mean by goodness? Surely, there is goodness only when there is total attention. Attention has no motive. When there is a motive for attention, is there attention? If I pay attention in order to acquire something, the acquisition, whether it be called good or bad, is not attention; it is a distraction, a division. There can be goodness only when there is a totality of attention in which there is no effort to be or not to be. Probably you are not used to all this.

To me, making effort to be good is a process which in itself brings about evil. A man who tries to be humble, who practices humility, breeds evil; because the moment you are conscious that you are humble, you are no longer humble, you are arrogant. Sirs, don't laugh it away. Humility is not to be practiced; and a man who practices humility is fostering arrogance. Virtue is not a thing to be cultivated; because a man who cultivates virtue, cultivates the ego, the 'me', only in more respectable clothing. As humility is not to be practiced, so goodness is not to be practiced; it comes into being only when there is the complete attention which comes with the total understanding of yourself.

Think about it, and you will see that the very practice of non-violence creates violence. To be free of violence, you have to understand all the implications of violence; and for that you must give your whole attention, which you cannot do if you are pursuing the so-called ideal. When the mind is able to give its undivided attention to *what is*, which is greed, then you will see that the mind is totally free from greed. It does not become non-greedy—it is free from greed, which is an entirely different state. You see, we use the ideal of non-greed as a means of getting rid of greed; but we can never get rid of greed through an ideal. We have practiced that ideal for centuries, and we are still greedy. But a man who really sees the necessity of being free from greed has no ideal; he is only concerned with greed, which means he is giving his whole attention to it. And when you give your whole attention to something, in that attention there is no comparison, no condemnation, no judgment. A mind that is comparing, condemning greed, is incapable of giving full attention, because it is concerned with comparison and condemnation.

So goodness is not an opposite, it is not a virtue; it is a state of being without motive which comes through self-knowledge.

Madanapalle, 2nd Public Talk, 19th February 1956

Then you will find the beauty of really observing every thought and its significance...

Question: As a man thinks so he becomes. Is it not essential to know how not to be at the mercy of one's own evil and wayward thoughts?

Krishnamurti: First, the questioner begins with the quotation, 'As a man thinks so he becomes'. Is it not very odd that we cannot think of any problem directly? We have innumerable quotations to support our theories—what the Bhagavad Gita, Marx, Sankara, Churchill or Mao Tse Tung

have said. Our mind is incapable of looking at anything directly and experiencing a thing directly. Quotation-knowledge has destroyed our capacity to find out the truth for ourselves. (Laughter) Yes, Sirs, you laugh and you don't know the misery behind that laugh.

Now, your mind is crippled; and the mind that is crippled is not capable of being free. It is only free when it realizes it is crippled; then there is a possibility of doing something. A mind saying 'I am not crippled', 'I am full of knowledge', 'I am full of quotations of other peoples' ideas', is incapable of the discovery of what is real. The man with such a mind is living at a level of 'second-hand'.

Now the next part of the question is, 'Is it not essential to know how not to be at the mercy of one's own crazy, evil and wayward thoughts'? In this question, there are two things involved. He says, 'How can I remain free from evil thoughts, evil and wayward thoughts'? Please follow this closely because it is very important, because if we can really see the significance of it, go behind the words you will discover something. Don't follow me merely verbally—which is, don't merely listen to the words and the vibrations of the words—but go into it.

Is there the thinker, the one apart from thought, apart from the evil, wayward thoughts? Please watch your own mind. We say, 'There is the 'I' who wants to remain apart from the evil, apart from thoughts which are vagrant, wandering'. That is to say, there is the 'I', the 'me' which says, 'This is a wayward thought', 'This is an evil action', 'This is good', 'This is bad', 'I must control this thought', 'I must keep to this thought'. That is what we know. Is the one, the 'I', the thinker, the judger, the one that judges, the censor, different from all this? Is the 'I' different from thought, different from envy, different from evil? The 'I' which says that it is different from this evil, is everlastingly trying to overcome me, trying to push me away, trying to become something. So you have this struggle, the effort to put away thoughts, not to be wayward.

We have, in the very process of thinking, created this problem of effort. Do you follow? Then you give birth to discipline, controlling thought—the 'I' controlling the thought which is not good: the 'I' which is trying to become non-envious, non-violent, to be this and to be that. So you have brought into being the very process of effort when there are the 'I' and the thing which it is controlling. That is the actual fact of our everyday existence.

Now, is the 'I' who is observing—the observer, the thinker, the actor—different from the action, from the thought, from the thing which it observes? We have so far said that the 'I' is different from thought. So let us keep to one thing—that is, the thinker is different from thought. The thinker says, 'My thoughts are vagrant, evil; therefore I must control them, shape them, discipline them'. In that process, that has been brought into being—this whole problem of effort and the negative form 'not to be'. Please listen to what I am saying, and don't interpret; if you will listen carefully, you will see something extraordinary coming out. As I said, you have brought into being the effort in different forms, the negation and assertion; that is our daily life.

But is there a difference between the thinker and the thought? Please find out. Is there? That is, if you don't think, would there be an 'I'? If there was no thought, no idea, no memory, no experience, would there be the 'I'? You say 'I' is the higher self, the thing which is beyond thought, which is guiding you, which is controlling you. Now, if you say that, again examine it;

don't accept it. If you say that, then the very entity that thinks about the Atman is still within the field of thought. The thing that is capable of being thought about is still within thought. That is, when I think about you, the particular name I know, when I recognize, you are already within the field of thought. Aren't you? So, my thinking is related to you. So the Atman or the higher self or whatever word you use, is still within the field of thought. So there is always a relationship between the thinker and the thought; they are not two separate states, they are one unitary process.

So there is only the thought which divides itself into the thinker and the thought, and brings the thinker into prominence. That thought creates the 'I' which becomes permanent because, after all, that is what it is seeking—security, permanency, certainty in my relationship with my wife, with my children, with my society; always the desire to be ever certain. Thought is desire; so thought, the desire seeking certainty, creates the 'I'. Then the 'I' is enclosed in permanency. Then that says, 'I must control my thoughts, I must push away this thought and take on that thought', as though that 'I' is separate. If you observe, the 'I' is not separate from thought. That is where the importance comes of really experiencing this thing, in which the thinker is the thought. That is real meditation, to find out how the mind is everlastingly operating in dividing the thinker and the thought.

The whole total process of thinking is what we are concerned with, not the 'I' which wants to look, which is creating, dominating, subjecting, sublimating thought. There is only one process which is thinking. The thinking which says, 'That is my house', has behind it the desire for security in that house. Similarly when you say 'my wife', in that thought there is security. So the 'I' is given prominence in certainty. There is only a process of thinking and not the 'I' separate from thought.

So when you realize that, when this realization, this understanding comes, what happens to the thoughts which are vagrant, wandering going all over the place like a butterfly, like a monkey? When there is no censor any more, when there is no entity which says, 'I must control thought', then what happens? Please follow this, Sirs. Then, is there such a thing as a wandering thought? Do you follow? There is no entity which is operating, which is judging; therefore every thought is a thought in itself, not to be compared as good and bad. So, there is no wandering or wavering.

The wandering thought exists when thought says, 'I am wandering, I must not do that, I must do this'. When there is no thinker, the entity which says that it will control thought, then we are only concerned with thought as it is, not as it should be. And then you will find the beauty of really observing every thought and its significance; because then there is no such thing as a wandering thought. You cut away the whole problem of effort, because you cannot come to reality through effort; effort must come to an end for reality to come. You must be capable of receiving. It is not a reward or a punishment. It is not a reward for good deeds. Society is concerned with your respectability but truth is not.

For truth to be, thought must be silent. Thought must not seek reward or punishment, it must not be concerned. Only in that state of mind in which there is no seeking, does truth come into being. Truth that is seeking is not truth at all, it is only the self-projected voice of self-fulfillment. So, when you see all this, when you see this whole picture of how the mind operates, then there is no

thought to be controlled, to be disciplined; then that very thought has significance; there is an observation of the thought as the observer watching thought, which is very difficult to experience, very arduous because that requires extraordinary perception and peace of mind. Every thought is the result of memory—memory which is but a name. After all, you think in words; your thought is the outcome of memory; memory is formed of images, symbols, words. So long as there is the ‘projection’ there must be thought. So a man who is concerned with the understanding of thought understands the whole process of naming, terming, remembering, recognizing. Then only is there a possibility of the mind becoming thoroughly still. This stillness comes with understanding. Then truth may bless that individual, may come to him, may set him free from all problems; and then only is there the creative being, not the man who paints, writes a poem or works ten hours a day.

Poona, 2nd Public Talk, 25th January 1953

On Good and Evil—A Dialogue

Naude: Do good and evil really exist, or are they simply conditioned points of view? Is there such a thing as evil and if so what is it? Is there such a thing as sin? And is there such a thing as goodness? And what is it to be really and deeply good?

Krishnamurti: I was thinking this morning on the same theme as your questions imply, whether there is an absolute good and absolute evil: as the Christian idea of sin and the Asiatic idea of Karma—as action which breeds more misery and more sorrow and yet out of that conflict of sorrow and pain a goodness is born. I was thinking about it the other day when I saw on the television some men killing baby seals. It is a terrible thing, I turned my head away quickly. Killing has always been wrong, not only human beings but animals. And religious people, not the people who believe in religion, but the really religious mind, has always shunned every form of killing. Of course, when you eat a vegetable you are killing—a vegetable—but that is the least form of killing and the simplest form of survival: I wouldn’t call that killing. One has watched in India, in Europe, and in America the acceptance of killing in war, in organized murder, which war is. Also “killing” people with words, with a gesture, with a look, with contempt: this form of killing has also been decried by religious people. But in spite of it all, killing has been going on—killing, violence, brutality, arrogance, aggressiveness—all ultimately leading, in action or in thought, to hurting, to brutalizing others. Also one has seen those ancient caves in North Africa and in the South of France where man is shown fighting animals, where perhaps fighting evil is understood. Or is it fighting as a form of amusement, to kill something, to overcome? So when one looks at all this, one asks if there is such a thing as evil in itself, totally devoid of the good; and what is the distance between evil and good. Is evil the diminution of good, slowly ending in evil? Or is good the diminution of evil, gradually becoming good? That is, through the time interval, moving from goodness to evil, and from evil to good?

Naude: You mean are they two ends of the same stick?

Krishnamurti: Two ends of the same stick—or are they two wholly separate things? So what is evil and what is good? The Christian world, the Inquisition, used to burn people for heresy, considering that was good.

Naude: The Communists do the same.

Krishnamurti: The Communists do it in their own way: for the good of the community, for the good of society, for the good of an economic well-being for the whole of man, and so on. In Asia too they have done all this kind of thing in various forms. But there has always been a group, until recently, where killing in any form was considered evil. Now all that is slowly disappearing, for economic and cultural reasons.

Naude: You mean the group that avoids killing...

Krishnamurti: ...is gradually disappearing. So there it is. Now is there such a thing as absolute good, and absolute evil? Is it a gradation: relative goodness and relative evil?

Naude: And do they exist as facts outside of conditioned points of view? For instance, for the Frenchman during the war the invading German was evil; and similarly for the German, the German soldier was good, he represented protection. Now is there a good and an evil, absolutely? Or is it simply the result of a conditioned point of view?

Krishnamurti: Is goodness dependent on the environment, on culture, on economic conditions? And if it is, is it good? Can goodness flower as an environmental, cultural condition. And is evil also the result of environmental culture? Does it function within that frame, or does it function outside it? these questions are implied when we ask: is there an absolute goodness and absolute evil?

Naude: Right.

Krishnamurti: First of all, what is goodness? Isn't the word "goodness" related to the word "God"? God being the highest form of the good, truth, excellence, and the capacity to express in relationship that quality of godliness, which is goodness; and anything opposite that is considered evil. If goodness is related to God, then evil is related to the devil. The devil being the ugly, the dark, the...

Naude: ...the twisted...

Krishnamurti: ...the distorted, the purposefully directed harmful, such as the desire to hurt—all that is contrary to the good; that is, the idea of God being good and the devil being the evil—right? Now I think we have more or less indicated what is good and what is evil. So we are asking if there is such a thing as absolute good and absolute, irrevocable evil.

Naude: Evil as a fact, as a thing.

Krishnamurti: Therefore let us first examine if there is absolute good. Not in the sense of goodness being related to God, or approximating itself to the idea of God, because then that goodness becomes merely speculative. Because God to most people is really a pretense of a belief in something—something excellent, noble.

Naude: Felicity?

Krishnamurti: Felicity and so on. Now what is good? I feel goodness is total order. Not only outwardly, but especially inwardly. I think that order can be absolute, as in mathematics I believe there is complete order. And it is disorder that leads to chaos, to destruction, to anarchy, to the so-called evil.

Naude: Yes.

Krishnamurti: Whereas total order in one's being, order in the mind, order in one's heart, order in one's physical activities—the harmony between the three is goodness.

Naude: The Greeks used to say that perfected man had attuned in total harmony his mind, his heart and his body.

Krishnamurti: Quite. So we shall say for the moment that goodness is absolute order. And as most human beings live in disorder they contribute to every form of mischief, which ultimately leads to destruction, to brutality, to violence, to various injuries, both psychic and physical. For all that one word may be used: "evil". But I don't like that word "evil" because it is loaded with Christian meaning, with condemnation and prejudice.

Naude: Conditioning.

Krishnamurti: That's right. In India and in Asia the words "evil", "sin", are always loaded—as "goodness" is always loaded. So could we brush away all the accumulations around these words and look at it as though anew. That is: is there absolute order in oneself? Can this absolute order be brought about in oneself and therefore in the outer world? Because the world is me, and I am the world; my consciousness is the consciousness of the world, and the consciousness of the world is me. So when there is order within the human being then there is order in the world. Now can this order, right through, be absolute? Which means: order in the mind, in the heart and in the bodily activities. That is, complete harmony. How can this be brought about? That is one point.

Then the other point is: is order something to be copied according to a design? Is order pre-established by thought, by the intellect, and copied in action by the heart? Or in relationship? So is order a blueprint? How is this order to be brought about?

Naude: Right.

Krishnamurti: Order is virtue. And disorder is non-virtue, is harmful, is destructive, is impure—if we can use that word.

Naude: One thinks of the Sanskrit word "Adharma".

Krishnamurti: Adharma, yes. So is order something put together according to a design drawn by knowledge, thought? Or is order outside the field of thought and knowledge? One feels there is absolute goodness, not as an emotional concept, but one knows, if one has gone into oneself

deeply, that there is such a thing: complete, absolute, irrevocable goodness, or order. And this order is not a thing put together by thought; if it is, then it is according to a blueprint, but if it is imitated then the imitation leads to disorder, or to conformity. Conformity, imitation, and the denial of what is, is the beginning of disorder, leading ultimately to what may be called evil. So we are asking: is goodness, which is (as we said) order and virtue, is it the product of thought? Which means can it be cultivated by thought? Can virtue ever be cultivated? To cultivate implies to bring slowly into being which means time.

Naude: Mental synthesis.

Krishnamurti: Yes. Now is virtue the result of time? And is order therefore a matter of evolution? And so is absolute order, absolute goodness, a matter of slow growth, cultivation, all involving time? As we said the other day thought is the response of memory, knowledge, and experience, which is the past which is stored up in the brain. In the brain cells themselves the past is. So does virtue lie in the past and is it therefore cultivatable, to be pushed forward? Or is virtue, order, only in the now? The now is not related to the past.

Naude: You are saying that goodness is order and that order is not the product of thought; but order, if it exists at all, must exist in behavior, behavior in the world and in relationship. People always think that proper behavior in relationship, in the world must be planned, that order is always the result of planning. And quite often people get the idea, when they have listened to you, that awareness, the state of being you speak about in which there is no room for the action of thought, they get the feeling that this is a sort of disincarnate energy, which can have no action and no relationship to the world of men and events and behavior. They think that therefore it has no real value, and not what you might call a temporal and historical significance.

Krishnamurti: Right, Sir.

Naude: You are saying that goodness is order and order is not planned.

Krishnamurti: When we talk about order, don't we mean order in behavior, in relationship, not an abstract order, not a goodness in heaven, but order, goodness in relationship and action in the now. When we talk about planning, obviously there must be planning at a certain level.

Naude: Architecture.

Krishnamurti: Architecture, building railways, going to the moon and so on, there must be a design, a planning, a very co-ordinated intelligent operation taking place. We are surely not mixing up the two: there must be planning, order, co-operation, the carrying out together of certain plans, a well laid-out city, a community—all that demands planning. We are talking of something entirely different. We are asking if there is absolute order in human behavior, if there is absolute goodness, as order, in oneself and therefore in the world. And we said order is not planned, can never be planned. If it is planned, then the mind is seeking security, because the brain demands security; seeking security it will suppress, or destroy, or pervert what is and try to conform, imitate. This very imitation and conformity is disorder, from which all the mischief

begins, the neuroses and various distortions of the mind and the heart. Planning implies knowledge.

Naude: Thinking.

Krishnamurti: Knowledge, thinking and ordering the thought as ideas. So we are asking: is virtue the outcome of planning? Obviously it is not. The moment your life is planned according to a pattern then you are not living, you are merely conforming to a certain standard and therefore that conformity leads to contradiction in oneself. The “what is” and the “what should be”, that breeds contradiction and therefore conflict. That very conflict is the source of disorder. So order, virtue, goodness is in the moment of the now. And therefore it is free of the past. That freedom can be relative.

Naude: How do you mean?

Krishnamurti: One may be conditioned by the culture in which one lives, by the environment and so on. One either frees oneself totally from all the conditioning and therefore is absolutely free; or there may be partial unconditioning.

Naude: Yes, get rid of one set of conditions...

Krishnamurti: ...and fall into another.

Naude: Or just discard one set like Christianity and its taboos.

Krishnamurti: So that slow discarding may appear orderly, but it is not; because the slow peeling off of conditioning may temporarily give the appearance of freedom, but is not absolute freedom.

Naude: Are you saying that freedom is not the result of a particular operation with regard to one conditioning or another?

Krishnamurti: That's right.

Naude: You have said that freedom is at the beginning and not at the end. Is that what you mean?

Krishnamurti: Yes, that's it. Freedom is now, not in the future. So freedom, order, or goodness, is now, which expresses itself in behavior.

Naude: Yes, else it has no meaning.

Krishnamurti: Otherwise it has no meaning at all. Behavior in relationship not only with a particular individual, who is close to you, but behavior with everybody.

Naude: In the absence of all those elements of the past which make most people behave, what will make us behave? This freedom seems to so many people such a disincarnate thing, such a

bleak sky, such an immaterial thing. What is it in that freedom which will make us behave in the world of people and events with order?

Krishnamurti: Sir, look. We said in the last conversation that I am the world and the world is me. We said the consciousness of the world is my consciousness. My consciousness is the world's consciousness. When you make a statement of that kind either it is purely verbal and therefore has no meaning at all or it is something actual, living, vital. When one realizes that it is vital, in that realization is compassion—real compassion, not for one or two, but compassion for everybody, for everything. Freedom is this compassion, which is not disincarnate as an idea.

Naude: As a state of withdrawal.

Krishnamurti: My relationship is only in the now, not in the past, because if my relationship is rooted in the past I am not related now. So freedom is compassion, and that comes when there is the real deep realization that I am the world, the world is me. Freedom, compassion, order, virtue, goodness are one; and that is absolute. Now what relationship has non-goodness—which has been called evil, sin, original sin—what relationship has that with this marvelous sense of order?

Naude: Which is not the product of thinking, of civilization, of culture.

Krishnamurti: What is the relationship between the two? There is none. So when we move away from this order—move away in the sense of misbehave—does one enter into the field of evil, if we can use that word? Or is evil something totally apart from the good?

Naude: Whether deviation from the order of goodness is already an entry into the field of evil, or can these two not even touch at all?

Krishnamurti: That's right. I may misbehave. I may tell a lie. I may consciously or unconsciously hurt another, but I can clear it. I can wipe it away by apologizing, by saying "forgive me". It can be done immediately.

Naude: It can be ended.

Krishnamurti: So I am finding out something, which is: the non-ending of it, carrying it over in one's mind day after day, as hate, as a grudge...

Naude: ...guilt, fear...

Krishnamurti: ...does that nourish the evil? You follow?

Naude: Yes.

Krishnamurti: If I continue with it, keep within my mind the grudge which I bear against you, carry it on day after day, the grudge which involves hate, envy, jealousy, antagonism—all that is

violence. So what is the relationship of violence to evil and goodness? We are using the word “evil” very...

Naude: ...cautiously.

Krishnamurti: Cautiously. Because I don't like that word at all. So what is the relationship between violence and goodness? Obviously none at all! But the violence which I have cultivated—whether it is the product of society, the product of the culture, the environment, or inherited from the animal—that violence, by becoming aware of it, can be wiped away.

Naude: Yes.

Krishnamurti: Not a gradual wiping away; wipe it away as you wipe out a clean...

Naude: ...take a mark off the wall.

Krishnamurti: Then you are always in that goodness.

Naude: Are you saying that goodness is a wholly negative affair then?

Krishnamurti: Yes, it must be.

Naude: And in that way the negative is not related at all to the positive, because it is not the result of a gradual decline or accumulation of the positive. The negative exists when the positive is wholly absent.

Krishnamurti: Yes; put it round the other way. The negation of the grudge, the negation of violence and the negation of the continuity of the violence, that negation of it is the good.

Naude: Is the emptying.

Krishnamurti: The emptying of violence is the richness of the good.

Naude: Therefore the good is always intact.

Krishnamurti: Yes, it is never broken up, not fragmented. Sir, wait! So is there such a thing as absolute evil? I don't know if you have ever considered this: I have seen in India little statues made of clay in which needles, or thorns, have been put; I have seen it very often. The image is supposed to represent a person whom you want to hurt. In India there are very long thorns, you have seen them, from bushes, and they are stuck into these clay statuettes.

Naude: I didn't know they did that in India.

Krishnamurti: I have seen it. Now there is a determined action to produce evil in another, to hurt another.

Naude: An intent.

Krishnamurti: The intent, the ugly, deep, hatred.

Naude: Deliberate. This must be evil, Sir.

Krishnamurti: What is its relationship to good—good being all that we have said? This is a real intent to hurt people.

Naude: Organized disorder, one might say.

Krishnamurti: Organized disorder, which is the organized disorder of a society that rejects the good. Because the society is me. I am the society; if I don't change, society cannot change. And here is the deliberate intention to hurt another, whether it is organized as war or not.

Naude: In fact, organized war is the group manifestation of the phenomenon you are speaking about in India, putting the thorns through the little statues.

Krishnamurti: This is well known, this is as old as the hills. So I am saying this desire to hurt, consciously or unconsciously, and yielding to it, and giving it sustenance, is what? Would you call that evil?

Naude: Of course.

Krishnamurti: Then we shall have to say that will is evil.

Naude: Aggression is evil. Violence is evil.

Krishnamurti: Wait, see it! Will is evil, because I want to hurt you.

Naude: Someone might say though: the will to do you good—is that will also evil?

Krishnamurti: You cannot will to do good. Either you are good, or not good, you can't will goodness. Will being the concentration of thought as resistance.

Naude: Yes, you said that goodness is the absence of a blueprint.

Krishnamurti: So I am asking: is evil related to the good, or are the two things totally apart? And is there such a thing as absolute evil? There is absolute good, but absolute evil cannot exist. Right?

Naude: Yes, because evil is always cumulative, it is always to some degree or another.

Krishnamurti: Yes. So a man with the deep intention to hurt another—some incident, some accident, some affection or care, might change the whole thing. But to say that there is an absolute sin, absolute evil, is the most terrible thing to say. That is evil.

Naude: The Christians have personified evil as Satan and as an almost immutable force, almost equal to the good, almost equal to God. The Christians have enthroned evil almost eternally.

Krishnamurti: Look, Sir. You have seen those bushes in India, they have got long thorns, nearly two inches long.

Naude: Yes.

Krishnamurti: There are snakes which are poisonous, deadly poisonous, there are other things which are frighteningly cruel in nature, like the white shark, that appalling thing we saw the other day. Is that evil?

Naude: No.

Krishnamurti: No?

Naude: No, Sir.

Krishnamurti: It is protecting itself: the thorn is protecting itself against the animal so that the leaves are not eaten.

Naude: Yes and so is the snake.

Krishnamurti: So is the snake.

Naude: And the shark is following its nature.

Krishnamurti: So see what it means. Anything that is self-protective in the physical sense is not evil. But protecting oneself psychologically, resisting any movement, leads to disorder.

Naude: If I may interrupt here. This is the argument which many people use about war. They say that building up an army and using it, for instance, in South East Asia is the kind of physical protection which the shark...

Krishnamurti: That is too absurd an argument. The whole world is divided up for psychological reasons as “my country” and “your country”, “my God” and “your God”—that and economic reasons are the cause of war, surely? But I am trying to get at something different. Nature is terrible in certain ways.

Naude: Ruthless.

Krishnamurti: We human beings looking at it say, “That’s evil, how terrible”.

Naude: Lightning.

Krishnamurti: Earthquakes which destroy a thousand people in a few seconds. So the moment we assert that there is absolute evil, that very assertion is the denial of the good. Goodness implies total abnegation of the self. Because the “me” is always separative. The “me”, “my family”, the self, the person, the ego, is the center of disorder, because it is a divisive factor. The “me” is the mind, is thought. And we have never been able to move away from this egocentric activity. To move completely away from it is complete order, freedom, goodness. And to remain in the circle of self-centered movement breeds disorder; there is always conflict there. And we attribute this conflict to evil, to the devil, to bad karma, to environment, to society; but the society is me and I have built this society. So unless this me is totally transformed, I am always contributing to a major extent or to a minor extent to disorder.

Order means behavior in freedom. And freedom means love and not pleasure. When one observes all this one sees very clearly that there is a marvelous sense of absolute order.

The Awakening of Intelligence, pp. 124-136
2nd Conversation with Alain Naude
Malibu California 28th March 1971

The Containment of Evil—A Dialogue

Questioner P: One of the most vital problems that has concerned man is the necessity of containing evil. It appears as if at certain times in history, because of various circumstances, evil has had a wider field within which to operate. The manifestations of evil are so wide, the problems of evil so complex that the individual does not know how to deal with them.

What would you say is the way of dealing with evil? Is there such a thing as evil independent of good?

Krishnamurti: I wonder what you mean. The bush with so many thorns—do you call that evil? Do you call a serpent with poison, evil? No savage animal is evil—neither the shark nor the tiger. So what do you mean by the word evil? Something harmful? Something that can bring tremendous grief, something that can bring great pain, something that can destroy or prevent the light of understanding? Would you call war evil? Would you call the generals, the rulers, the admirals evil because they help to bring about war, destruction?

P: That which thwarts the nature of things can be called evil.

Krishnamurti: Man is brutal, is he evil?

P: If he is thwarting, if he through malignant intention makes certain things deviate....

Krishnamurti: I was just wondering what that word evil means. What does evil mean to an intelligent mind; a mind that is aware of all the horrors in the world?

P: Evil is that which diminishes consciousness, that which brings darkness.

Krishnamurti: Fear, sorrow, pain do that. Would you say that evil is the encouragement of fear? Is evil a means to further sorrow? Is evil social or environmental conditioning which perpetuates war? All these limit consciousness and create darkness and sorrow. Evil, according to the Christian idea, is the devil. Does the Hindu have any idea of evil? If he has an idea of evil, what would it be? Personally I never think of evil.

Would you say that in the flowering of goodness, there is no evil at all? That this state does not know evil? Or is evil an invention of the mind which breeds fear and creates the good?

P: May I say something? If you go deep down into the recesses of the human mind, into the history of mankind, there has always been the sorcerer, the witch who subverts the laws of nature, who brings fear and darkness. It is one of the strangest elements in the human mind. It is because of this terrible fear of the unknown, that darkness without limit, without end, that prevails through the history of man, that the human being has cried out for protection; a cry that echoes through human consciousness. It is this which is the unknown, un-named matrix of fear. It is not enough to suggest that it is fear. It is all that and more.

Krishnamurti: Are you saying that deep in man, in the inner recesses of the mind, there is the fear of the unknown, of something that man cannot touch or imagine? Being afraid so deeply, he demands protection of the gods and anything that brings an awakening of that danger, any intimation of that hidden thing, he calls evil?

P: This darkness exists deep in human consciousness all the time.

Krishnamurti: Is evil the opposite of the good, or is it totally independent of the good?

P: It is independent of the good.

Krishnamurti: You are saying it is independent. So, is evil something that is in itself unrelated to the beautiful, to love? Against evil, man has always sought protection, as he would against an animal. There is this hidden dark danger. Man is aware of it, he is frightened and seeks through incantations, rituals, prayers and so on to put it away and be guarded. The bush that is so full of thorns protects itself against the animal and the animal would call that evil as it cannot get at the leaves. Is there such a force, such an embodiment of evil which is totally apart from the good, the beautiful? There is this whole idea that evil is fighting good. This evil is seen as embodied in people and evil is always fighting the good and the gentle. I am asking, is evil totally independent of the good? You must be very careful not to become superstitious.

P: “Fear” of something is opposed to goodness. But the darkest fears are not “of anything”.

S: It is not only protection and fear and the fear involved in evil, but protection in order to move forward.

P: The demand for protection, the mantras as spells, the mandalas as magical diagrams and the mudras as magical gestures were intended to provide protection against evil.

Krishnamurti: You see when you go deeply into consciousness, you reach a point where the unknown appears as the dark, and there you stop, because you get frightened. The mind penetrates deeply up to a point, and below that point there is this feeling of dark emptiness. Because of the darkness, you have prayers, incantations, and because of the fear of the dark, you ask for protection.

Can the mind go through the darkness, which means can the mind not be afraid? Can it operate so that the darkness becomes light? Can you penetrate the darkness of which you are afraid, which you have named “evil”? Can you penetrate that so completely that darkness does not exist? Then, what is evil?

P: When the ritual mandala is drawn, the entry into the mandala is through spell and mudra. In this entry into the darkness, what is the spell which will open the gates?

Krishnamurti: Consciousness as thought investigates itself—its depth. As it enters it comes upon this darkness. This investigation is not a process of time. And you are asking what is the spell or

energy that will penetrate to the very bottom of the darkness, what is that energy and how is it to come into being?

The very energy which started investigating is still there, more heavy, vital as it enters, penetrates. Why do you ask whether there is need of greater energy?

P: Because energy dries up. We penetrate up to a point and do not go further.

Krishnamurti: Because of fear, because of apprehension of something we do not know, we dissipate energy instead of bringing it into focus. I want to penetrate into myself. I see entering into myself is the same movement as the outer. It is entering into space. In entering into space, there is a certain demand, a certain energy. That energy must be without any effort, without any distortion. As it enters, it gathers momentum. If it has no passage through which it can escape, it is not distorted. It becomes deeper, wider, stronger. Then you reach a point where there is darkness. And how does one enter that darkness with this tremendous energy? (pause)

P: The first question with which we started was how is evil to be contained. You have said as one penetrates the sea of darkness, darkness is not; light is. But when there is evil in human beings, in certain situations, in certain happenings, is there any action which can contain this evil?

Krishnamurti: I would not put it that way. Resistance to evil strengthens evil. So, if the mind is living in goodness, then there is no resistance and evil cannot touch it. Therefore there is no containing of evil.

P: Is there only goodness then?

Krishnamurti: We have to go back to something else—the mind has gone into darkness and it is finished with darkness. But is there evil which is independent of all that? Or is evil part of goodness?

You see in nature there is the big living on the little, the bigger on the big. I would not call that evil. The deliberate desire to hurt another; is that part of evil? I want to hurt another; is that part of evil? I want to hurt you because you have done something to me; is that evil?

P: That is part of evil.

Krishnamurti: Then that implies will. You hurt me, and, because I am proud, I want to retaliate. Wanting to retaliate is an action of will. Whether it is the will to react or to do good, both are evil.

P: Again coming back to the mandala; evil can enter when the gateways are not protected. Here, your eyes and ears are the gateways.

Krishnamurti: So you are saying when the eyes see clearly, ears hear clearly, then evil cannot enter.

To go back, the deliberate intention, the collection of intentions, the thinking it over, which is all the deep intention to hurt, is part of will. I think that is where evil is—the deliberate act to hurt. You hurt me, I hurt you; I apologize and it is finished. But if I hold, retain, strengthen deliberately, follow a policy to hurt you, which is part of the will in man to do harm or good, then there is evil.

So is there a way of living without will? The moment I resist, evil must be on one side, and the good on the other and there is relationship between the two. When there is no resistance, there is no relationship between the two. And love then is an open space, without any words, without any resistance. Love is action out of emptiness. As we had been discussing yesterday, when the male elements deliberately become assertive, demanding, possessive, dominating, man invites evil. And the female, yielding, yielding, yielding and deliberately yielding in order to dominate, also invites evil.

So, where there is the cunning pursuit of domination, which is the operation of will, there is the beginning of evil.

You see against that evil we try to protect ourselves. We are ourselves creating evil and yet we draw a circle a diagram round the doorstep of the house to seek protection from evil, and inwardly the serpent of evil is operating.

Keep your house clean. Forget all the mantras; nothing can touch you.

We ask protection of the gods whom we have created. It is really quite fantastic.

All these wars, all the racial hatreds, all the accumulated hatreds which man has been storing up, that must have a collected hatred, a gathered evil. The Hitlers, the Mussolinis, the Stalins, the concentration camps, the Atilas; all that must be stored, must have a body somewhere.

So also, the feeling of “do not kill, be kind, be gentle, be compassionate”—that also must be stored somewhere.

When people try to protect themselves against the one, the evil, they are protecting themselves against the good too, because man has created these two. So, can the mind enter into darkness and the very entrance into it is the dispelling of darkness?

Tradition and Revolution, pp. 9-13

If the means is evil, the end will also be evil...

As long as there is the desire to gain, to achieve, to become, at whatever level, there is inevitably anxiety, sorrow, fear. The ambition to be rich, to be this or that, drops away only when we see the rottenness, the corruptive nature of ambition itself. The moment we see that the desire for power in any form—for the power of a prime minister, of a judge, of a priest, of a guru—is fundamentally evil, we no longer have the desire to be powerful. But we don't see that ambition is corrupting, that the desire for power is evil; on the contrary, we say that we shall use power for good—which is all nonsense. A wrong means can never be used towards a right end. If the

means is evil, the end will also be evil. Good is not the opposite of evil; it comes into being only when that which is evil has utterly ceased.

Think on These Things, p. 21

There is a power which is in no way related to that power which is evil...

Power is derived from asceticism, from action, from position, from virtue, from domination and so on. All such forms of power are evil. It corrupts and perverts. The use of money, talent, cleverness to gain power or deriving power from any use of these is evil.

But there is a power which is in no way related to that power which is evil. This power is not to be bought through sacrifice, virtue, good works and beliefs, nor is it to be bought through worship, prayers and self-denying or self-destructive meditations. All effort to become or to be must wholly, naturally, cease. Only then that power which is not evil, can be.

Krishnamurti's Notebook, p. 23

The silence in which there is no image-making or waiting for further experience...

Those who have attended these talks fairly regularly will know that we have been considering the very complex problem of change. This evening I would like to discuss, if possible, the power that brings about change, and what it is; and whether there can be a direct experiencing of that power, that energy, or what you will. I think we realize that some kind of energy, force, or power is necessary for change. Politically we see it very clearly. There are the extreme forms of tyranny, and also the more persuasive methods of bringing about a reform through the power of organization. Most of us rely on some form of compulsion, on political, religious or social coercion, because we are caught in inertia, we are lazy, slothful. For most of us, change implies danger, and so we are unwilling to go through this psychological revolution which is so essential if we are to create a world in which human beings can act cleanly, decently.

We have been considering the various approaches to this problem of change; and it seems to me that we inevitably come to the central question as to what it is that brings about this change. What is that power, that energy, that force? Compulsion, self-discipline, any kind of coercion, creates resistance; and resistance does produce energy, power, which brings about a certain form of change. You must have noticed in your own life that the more you resist something, the more energy you have; the more you discipline, the more concentrated, focused you are, the greater the power. But does that bring about a fundamental change? Is that the power that is necessary for this inward, psychological revolution? Does the cultivation of the opposite bring about this essential transformation? If I hate, will the cultivation of love bring about a radical change? Is not the opposite of hate still within the field of hate? Is goodness the opposite of evil? Must I go through evil to find goodness? Is goodness the outcome of any form of compulsion, any form of discipline, coercion, suppression? Does not the cultivation of goodness, of compassion, of kindness, merely emphasize the "me", the self? That is, suppose I hate, and, realizing its implications, I sedulously cultivate goodness, kindness; does not that process strengthen the "me", the self? The cultivation of goodness obviously brings about a certain change; there is

power, there is energy. But surely, that change is still within the field of the “me”, of the self, of the mind, is it not? And as I have pointed out, the more you cultivate goodness and become conscious that you are good, the more evil there is; for evil is the outcome of the self.

Let us say you realize all this, and you also see the necessity of a fundamental transformation. How are you to bring about that revolution? What is the power, the creative energy that brings about that revolution, and how is it to be released? You have tried disciplines, you have tried the pursuit of ideals and various speculative theories: that you are God, and that if you can realize that Godhood or experience the Atman, the highest, or what you will, then that very realization will bring about a fundamental change. Will it? First you postulate that there is a reality of which you are a part, and build up round it various theories, speculations, beliefs, doctrines, assumptions, according to which you live; and by thinking and acting according to that pattern you hope to bring about a fundamental change. Will you?

Suppose you assume, as most so called religious people do, that there is in you, fundamentally, deeply, the essence of reality; and that if, through cultivating virtue, through various forms of discipline, control, suppression, denial, sacrifice, you can get into touch with that reality, then the required transformation will be brought about. Is not this assumption still part of thought? Is it not the outcome of a conditioned mind, a mind that has been brought up to think in a particular way, according to certain patterns? Having created the image, the idea, the theory, the belief, the hope, you then look to your creation to bring about this radical change.

So, one must first see the extraordinarily subtle activities of the “me”, of the mind, one must become aware of the ideas, beliefs, speculations, and put them all aside; for they are really deceptions, are they not? Others may have experienced reality; but if you have not experienced it, what is the good of speculating about it or imagining that you are in essence something real, immortal, godly? That is still within the field of thought, and anything that springs from thought is conditioned, is of time, of memory; therefore it is not real. If one actually realizes that—not speculatively, not imaginatively or foolishly, but actually sees the truth that any activity of the mind in its speculative search, in its philosophical groping, any assumption, any imagination or hope is only self-deception—then what is the power, the creative energy that brings about this fundamental transformation? I do not know if you have come so far in your meditations, in your thoughts, in your daily awareness as to have rejected completely all assumptions, all imaginations, all speculative hopes, fears and demands. Surely, any person who is really seeking must come to that, must he not? And if you have come so far, what happens? What then is the force, the energy, the creative something that brings about a radical change?

You see, as long as I pursue an idea, however noble, however imaginatively godly, theoretically supreme, there is always the duality of the seeker and the thing which he seeks, is there not? There is the entity who hates, and the entity who is pursuing peace, love; the one who is good, and the other who is evil. That is our struggle, our conflict; and I think that is the central problem—how to bridge the duality, how to go beyond. That is, suppose I hate, I have no affection in my heart. My heart is full of the things of the mind; it is cunning, devious, calculating, and I realize it. Also I feel that there can be a transformation in the world only when there is more love, a state of compassion, and therefore I pursue love. So there is in me the duality of love and hate, with its struggle: the private thought and the public life, that which I am,

and that which I am trying to be. There is a constant inward battle, conflict—and if we can understand that, then perhaps we shall find out how to awaken the energy, that creative something which will bring about a transformation. To understand that the thinker and the thought are one—to experience it, not repeat it verbally, which has no meaning—that, it seems to me, is the central problem. The self, the “me” is made up of this struggle of duality, is it not? There is the “me” and the “not-me”, the bundle of memories, of conditionings, of hopes, and what it wants to be. The struggle between what is and what should be, the ever-lasting conflict between what I am and what I want to be, not only consciously, but deep down, unconsciously, in the obscure recesses of my mind and heart—is not that very struggle the process of the “me”? But if I can really experience that the thinker is the thought, the observer is the observed, then there is a release of that creative energy which brings about a fundamental transformation.

So, if you are at all aware of your self, you will know that there is this constant struggle going on, which only emphasizes, gives nourishment, strength to the “me”, to the “I-ness”, to the ego, to the self—whether it be the higher or the lower self, it is all the same, because it is all within the field of thought. And is not the thinker created by thought? Is the thinker separate from thought? As long as the thinker is trying to control thought, shape it, give it a certain direction, which is the process of discipline, that very struggle gives strength to the thinker and so gives vitality to the “me”, and it is in this center of the “me” that the revolution, the change must take place. And how is that to come about? I see clearly that no form of compulsion, no discipline, no incentive, no hope, no vision can bring it about, because in all these there is a duality, the what is and what should be, the observer and the observed; and as long as the observer exists, there must always be the struggle to achieve the thing which he has observed, which he has thought out. This struggle gives strength to the thinker, which is the “me”, the self. I see that very clearly, so what am I to do?

Perhaps, in coming to this point, we have used the conscious mind; we have followed the argument, we have opposed or accepted it, we have seen it clearly or dimly. That is, the conscious mind is active in pursuit of what the speaker is saying. But to go further and experience more deeply requires a mind that is quiet and alert to find out, does it not? It is no longer pursuing ideas; because, if you pursue an idea, there is the thinker following what is being said, and so you immediately create duality. If you want to go further into this matter of fundamental change, is it not necessary for the active mind to be quiet? Surely, it is only when the mind is quiet that it can understand the enormous difficulty, the complex implications of the thinker and the thought as two separate processes—the experiencer and the experienced, the observer and the observed. Revolution, this psychological, creative revolution in which the “me” is not, comes only when the thinker and the thought are one, when there is no duality as the thinker controlling thought; and I suggest it is this experience alone that releases the creative energy which in turn brings about a fundamental revolution, the breaking up of the psychological “me”. But this is an extremely difficult thing to realize, because the mind is so conditioned to struggle, to be separate, to be secure, to be permanent, that it is afraid to think of the problem anew. We have probably never experienced this state in which the thinker is absent, in which the observer is not, because we are so conditioned by the idea, so accustomed to the feeling that the thinker is always separate from his thought; and you are not going to experience it by merely listening to me. But if you have earnestly followed these talks and have really experimented with yourself during the past week; you are bound to come to the point when you are fully aware that

there is this extraordinary division between the thinker and the thought. Most of us are still unaware of this division. We are caught up in the conflict between the thinker and the thought, in the everlasting battle of the “me”, the self, to acquire, to reject, to suppress, to become something. With that we are very familiar; but we are not aware of the division. If, becoming aware of the division, the thinker seeks to destroy it, to bridge it over, he increases the division, because then the thinker is again seeking to be something which he is not, thereby giving himself greater strength, greater security.

So, how is it possible for you and me, as individuals, to come to this experience, to this realization? We know the way of power—power through domination, power through discipline, power through compulsion. Through political power we hope to change fundamentally; but such power only breeds further darkness, disintegration, evil, the strengthening of the “me”. We are familiar with the various forms of acquisition, both individually and as groups; but we have never tried the way of love, and we don’t even know what it means. Love is not possible as long as there is the thinker, the center of the “me”. Realizing all this, what is one to do? Surely, the only thing which can bring about a fundamental change, a creative, psychological release, is everyday watchfulness, being aware from moment to moment of our motives, the conscious as well as the unconscious. When we realize that disciplines, beliefs, ideals only strengthen the “me”, and are therefore utterly futile—when we are aware of that from day to day, see the truth of it, do we not come to the central point when the thinker is constantly separating himself from his thought, from his observations, from his experiences? As long as the thinker exists apart from his thought, which he is trying to dominate, there can be no fundamental transformation. As long as the “me” is the observer, the one who gathers experience, strengthens himself through experience, there can be no radical change, no creative release. That creative release comes only when the thinker is the thought—but the gap cannot be bridged by any effort. When the mind realizes that any speculation, any verbalization, any form of thought only gives strength to the “me”, when it sees that as long as the thinker exists apart from thought there must be limitation, the conflict of duality—when the mind realizes that, then it is watchful, everlastingly aware of how it is separating itself from experience, asserting itself, seeking power. In that awareness, if the mind pursues it ever more deeply and extensively without seeking an end, a goal, there comes a state in which the thinker and the thought are one. In that state there is no effort, there is no becoming, there is no desire to change; in that state the “me” is not, for there is a transformation which is not of the mind.

Question: One must obviously know the bad in order to know the good. Does this not imply the process of evolution?

Krishnamurti: Must we know drunkenness to know sobriety? Must you go through hate in order to know what it is to be compassionate? Must you go through wars, destroying yourself and others, to know what peace is? Surely, this is an utterly false way of thinking, is it not? First you assume that there is evolution, growth, a moving from bad to good, and then you fit your thinking into that pattern. Obviously, there is physical growth, the little plant becoming the big tree; there is technological progress, the wheel evolving, through centuries, into the jet plane. But is there psychological progress, evolution? That is what we are discussing: whether there is a growth, an evolution of the “me”, beginning with evil and ending up in good. Through a process of evolution, through time, can the “me”, which is the center of evil, ever become noble, good?

Obviously not. That which is evil, the psychological “me”, will always remain evil. But we do not want to face that. We think that through the process of time, through growth and change, the “I” will ultimately become reality. That is our hope, that is our longing: that the “I” will be made perfect through time. What is this “I”, this “me”? It is a name, a form, a bundle of memories, hopes, frustrations, longings, pains, sorrows, passing joys. We want this “me” to continue and become perfect, and so we say that beyond the “me” there is a “supreme”, a higher self, a spiritual entity which is timeless; but since we have thought of it, that “spiritual” entity is still within the field of time, is it not? If we can think about it, it is obviously within the field of time, is it not? If we can think about it, it is obviously within the field of our reasoning.

Please, if I can think about the spiritual state, if I know what it looks like, what it tastes like, what its sensations are, it is already within the field of my knowledge; and my knowledge is based on memory, on conditioning. Surely, that which I can think about is not spiritual, timeless. Thought is the result of the past, of memory, of time; and thought has created this so-called spiritual entity because I am conditioned to accept that theory, I have been brought up from childhood to think in that way. Perhaps others are conditioned not to believe in a spiritual entity—which is actually happening in the world. They will deny that there is a spiritual entity, because they have been conditioned to think in those terms.

The mind, seeing its own impermanency, its own transiency, craves a permanent state; and the very craving creates the symbol, the sensation, the idea, the belief to which we cling. So, there is the “me” who is transient, and the “super-me”, the higher self, which we consider to be permanent; and the mind is pursuing the permanent, thereby creating duality, the conflict of the opposites. In dividing thought into the superficial “me” which is impermanent, and the “me” which is concealed, far away, timeless, spiritual, with all the various degrees between the two, I have given birth to the conflict of duality; and to achieve the timeless, I say I must have time, there must be a psychological growth, a becoming. In this process there is always the “me”, the observer, and the thing which he observes and is going to gain; and in giving himself to this struggle, he strengthens his longings, his desires. And to achieve what he is after, he must have time, the future; therefore he has reincarnation—if not now, tomorrow. But if we can cut across all that, then we will see that as long as there is the thinker apart from the thought, the observer separate from the observed, there must be conflict; and through conflict there can be no understanding, no peace.

Now, is it possible for the thinker and the thought, for the observer and the observed, to be one? You will never find out if you merely glance at this problem and superficially ask me to explain what I mean by this or that. Surely, this is your problem, it is not my problem only; you are not here to find out how I look at this problem, or the problems of the world. This constant battle within, which is so destructive, so deteriorating—it is your problem, is it not? And it is also your problem how to bring about a radical change in yourself and not be satisfied with superficial revolutions in politics, in economics, in different bureaucracies. You are not trying to understand me, or the way I look at life. You are trying to understand yourself, and these are your problems which you have to face; and by considering them together, which is what we are doing in these talks, we can perhaps help each other to look at them more clearly, see them more distinctly. But to see clearly merely at the verbal level is not enough. That does not bring about a creative psychological change. We must go beyond the words, beyond all symbols and their sensations—

the symbol of love, the symbol of God, the Hindu and the Christian symbols; for, though they create certain responses, they are all at the verbal level, at the level of images. We must put aside all these things and come to the central issue: how to dissolve the “me” which is time-binding, in which there is no love, no compassion. It is possible to go beyond only when the mind does not separate itself as the thinker and the thought. When the thinker and the thought are one, only then is there silence, the silence in which there is no image-making or waiting for further experience. In that silence there is no experiencer who is experiencing, and only then is there a psychological revolution which is creative.

Ojai, 9th Public Talk, 30th August 1952

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