

## 'The Containment of Evil'

Krishnamurti, *Tradition and Revolution* Dialogue 3 New Delhi 15th December 1970

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 dependent 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?