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Introduction

When first privileged to meet Krishnamurti, I was deeply struck by the intensity of his quietude. The intensity bespoke great energy and his quietude expressed a settled tranquillity. Such a combination is rare; indeed, so rare that on encountering it nothing can be taken for granted.

Our meeting was, as we say loosely, accidental. It was in a sound studio. I had neither met him before nor read any of his books. Yet, amazingly, he invited me on the spot to undertake a video-taped dialogue with him. He seemed not in the least concerned that, in the ordinary sense, he did not know me from Adam. I inferred that he was either a great gambler or so attuned to the present instant that his action was exact, a paragon of timeliness. There was something profoundly impersonal in that invitation without his being aloof or indifferent.

The next shock came with his asking me, "What would you like to talk about?" I replied, "How about hearing and seeing?" He accepted the topic joyously. And so immediately began, impromptu, a conversation on inward hearing and inward seeing. Two years later, again utterly unexpectedly for me, he invited me to undertake a series of dialogues that would encompass the kernel of his teaching. Though years before, I had been in radio broadcasting -- announcing and newscasting -- and so had some professional acquaintance with studio programming, none of that experience was decisive for the movement of the dialogues. They developed out of their own germ, without any rehearsal, prearrangement, contrivance or hands-on fashioning. Both his ease and intensity of focus were amazing.

Krishnamurti was an exact embodiment of his doctrine of "choiceless awareness." Here, the word "choiceless" might suggest only a mode of subjectivity. On the contrary, choiceless awareness while reflected in the persona, is in no way reducible to it and so eludes a psychological reduction. Choicelessness is the mind's equivalent of the silence out of which intelligible utterance arises, of "that emptiness in which the things of the mind can exist but the things are not the mind... that emptiness has no centre and so is capable of infinite movement. Creation is born out of this emptiness but it is not the creation of man putting things together. That creation of emptiness is love and death." This last sentence points directly and immediately to the character of the instant for both self-awakening and self-misunderstanding.. Unless there is a psychological death to our self-identification with memory and upon the same instant a total understanding of need, we remain collapsed into the content of thought and a timely response to the instant eludes us.

"When there is a total understanding of need, the outward and the inner, then desire is not a torture. Then it has a quite different meaning, a significance far beyond the content of thought and it goes beyond feeling, with its emotions, myths and

illusions. With the total understanding of need, not the mere quantity or the quality of it, desire then is a flame and not a torture. Without this flame life itself is lost. It is this flame that burns away the pettiness of its object, the frontiers, the fences that have been imposed upon it. Then call it by whatever name you will, love, death, beauty. Then it is there without an end."

Some might think it untoward to begin a short introduction to sagely works with a personal anecdote. One thinks of Krishnamurti's repeated caution to his audiences: "The speaker is unimportant." Then there is Chuang Tzu's: "The Perfect man has no self; the Holy man has no merit; the Sage has no fame." (All three being the same.) True enough and almost never pondered, let alone embodied. Yet to find in such words an invitation to ignore the personal presence of a great teacher (whether in the flesh or remembered) betrays a shallow readiness to try to go beyond where one has not begun. Krishnamurti admonishes us that "Meditation is not something different from daily life... it is the seeing of what is and going beyond it." If one has not seen what is, how can one go beyond it?

Unfortunately, academic practice shows little or no understanding of "seeing what is" in the context of genuine self-inquiry. Rather, academic life is a journey through the forest of abstractions. Experimental science has the advantage of requiring laboratory demonstration of its theoretical conclusions. Even so, this procedure is pursued within the dual structure of perceiver and perceived. Perception without the perceiver, as in meditation is unheard of. "This perception is entirely different from seeing an object without an observer, because in the perception of meditation there is no object and therefore no experience... What meaning has such meditation? There is no meaning; there is no utility. But in that meditation there is a movement of great ecstasy... It is the ecstasy which gives to the eye, to the brain, and to the heart the quality of innocency. Without seeing life as something totally new, it is a routine, a boredom, a meaningless affair. So meditation is of the greatest importance. It opens the door to the incalculable, to the measureless."

This ecstatic pointer of Krishnamurti's so escapes our contemporary mind-set as to be practically unintelligible. Yet it is supremely intelligent. How so? Because it implies a radical distinction between consciousness and awareness. In our time, philosophy and depth psychology have virtually absolutized consciousness. They fail to discern that consciousness is not self-correcting. How can it be so since as consciousness of, it is ever tied to change? It is only as awareness has an object that consciousness comes into play. In itself awareness is independent of objects and changeless. On that account it is the door to the incalculable and measureless.

Krishnamurti invites us to begin the most radical self-inquiry since it opens out upon the infinite space of awareness. Self-inquiry begins by asking not what am I but what am I not? Such a no-nonsense question has no need of theoretical structures, the

conceptual paraphernalia of our depth psychologies, philosophies and theologies and belief systems. The question is astonishingly yet frighteningly simple; frightening because it entails the deepest sense of aloneness since none but oneself can ask the question nor answer it. Yet, with the patience, courage and radical trust to hang in there without bolting from it one discovers the unlonely aloneness of that "meditation which is absolutely no effort, no achievement, no thinking, the brain is quiet, not made quiet by will, by intention, by conclusion and all that nonsense; it is quiet. And, being quiet, it has infinite space."

In this short introduction, I have deliberately avoided taking an academic approach to Krishnamurti's teaching. To have done so would have falsified his spirit and quite missed the mark of his message. He was not concerned in the career of ideas and the ongoing palaver that is believed to express the finest examples of the life of the mind. In his last talk (January 1986) he put the matter cogently and succinctly: "It would be useless for you and the speaker to listen to a lot of words, but if we could together take a very long journey, not in terms of time, not in terms of belief or conclusions or theories, but in examining very carefully the way of our lives, fear, uncertainty, insecurity and all the inventions that man has made, including the extraordinary computers. If we take a long journey into this, where are we at the end of two million years? Where are we going, not as some theory, not what some wretched book says, however holy it is, but where are we all going? And where have we begun? They're both related to each other: where we are going, where we begin. The beginning may be the ending. Don't agree. Find out."

Right away, one hears the cry: "How, how find out?!" The very word, how, betrays a belief in the power of process and procedure to produce an effect; and indeed, they do in the material order. But here, the directive to find out addresses a different sphere, the sphere of one's mis-relation to oneself. The attempt to impose upon this disorder any discipline according to a pattern only hardens the misrelation, binding it further to time, belief, conclusions and theories. There is no how to making a pure act of attention to what is at hand. There is nothing mysterious about this. In fact, in the normal course of daily living we make, perhaps, a few such acts but quickly fall out of them. Why? The answer to that question comes only through self-examination -- not through theories of the unconscious or from learned disquisitions on the nature of man. The pure act of attention is spontaneous and free; the hearer and the heard, the perceiver and perceived drop away leaving only listening and seeing. "Only when the mind is blissful, quiet, without any movement of its own, without projection of thought, conscious or unconscious -- only then does the eternal come into being."

During this century we have taken in with our mother's milk the enervating dogma that the hallmarks of human nature are anxiety (angst) and estrangement, a secularized version of the dogma of original sin. But through meditation, as Krishnamurti revealed it, and self-inquiry, one discovers one's original nature, original

innocence and the natural state. Is this, then, the heart of the matter? Yes, since the heart of the matter is a matter of the heart.

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