Question: How can we create a happy world when there is suffering?

Krishnamurti: You did not listen to what was being said. You were occupied with your question. While I was talking, your mind was wondering how you were going to ask your question, how you were going to put it into words, so your mind was occupied with what you were going to ask, and you did not really listen. There was no pause, no gap, between when I stopped and your question. You immediately jumped into it—which means, really, you did not listen, you did not see the importance of what I was saying, you were not paying attention. It is really important to know how to listen to people—to the old man or to your sister or to your brother or to the man who goes by—which means really that your mind is quiet, so that a new idea, a new feeling, a new perception can penetrate. What I was saying is really very complex, very difficult. You did not let that penetrate, enter your mind, because your mind was occupied with, ‘I must ask a question. How shall I put it?’

Or, you were looking out of the window—it is nice to look out because the trees are beautiful—but then you saw somebody come in, and your mind became agitated like those leaves on the tree. So, please, as I suggested, write out your questions, and when I finish talking, wait a minute.
and then read your question. Then your mind will follow what I am saying, so that you begin to really listen. I think if we know how to listen, we will learn much more than all the time struggling to pay attention.

Someone asked, ‘What is a beautiful world, and how can one create it when there is so much suffering?’ Let us think together why it is that most of us want to do something. We think that activity, doing something, is more important than understanding what the problem is, what it is all about. You see a beggar, and your instinct is to give him something. But what generally happens is that, after giving, you forget all about it. You do not understand, you do not inquire into the whole question of poverty, here and everywhere in the world. You know there are poor people, and you also know that there is inward poverty. You may have a great deal of money, you may live in a luxurious house, but inwardly you may be as poor as a beggar. If you realize this, you are afraid, and so you begin to read books, to acquire knowledge. It is like a man who covers himself with jewels and lives in a palace and thinks that he is rich.

You learn to read or quote a great many spiritual teachers and the Bhagavad-Gita. You may want to do good, but you do not stop at that. You want to help the whole world and
put an end to the misery in the world. So you join groups, you join a society, or you form an institution. You become a secretary, you pay dues, and you gradually get lost in some organization. Actually, you do very little good in the world.

To do good really, you must understand yourself as you are, in the very process of doing good. Any action you do should help you to understand yourself, to go into yourself. Then in the transformation of yourself, in the changing of yourself, there is a possibility of bringing about a different world. Merely to do good or to join a society for doing good, seems to be superficial. But if, in the very action of doing good, you begin to understand the complications of life, then out of that there can be a change, there can be a world in which suffering will not exist.

Question: Why is stealing considered to be bad?

Krishnamurti: Why do you think stealing is bad? You have a watch and I take it away from you. Do you think that is right? I take away something from you which belongs to you; which your father has given to you; or which you have got by some other means. I take it away from you without telling you; without your knowing it. Is that a good action? It may be that you have got the watch because of your greed.
But I am equally greedy, equally acquisitive, so I take it away from you. This is called stealing. Obviously it is not right, is it? You see, there are some boys and girls who steal as a habit. Older people do that too; though they have money, though they have things which they really need, the desire to steal overcomes them. That is a disease. It is a kind of mental perversion, an aberration, a mental twist. Without understanding that twist, the older people generally punish or hurt you and say that you must not steal, that it is very bad, and that you may be put in prison. They frighten you; and so the twist becomes more twisted, hidden, darker. But if there was an explanation, if the parent or the teacher took the trouble to explain and not condemn, not threaten, then perhaps that twist might disappear. One of the difficulties is that the teachers and the parents have no time, they have no patience; they have so many other children; they want a result, a quick result, and so, they threaten and hope that the boy will stop stealing. But it does not generally happen that way. The boy goes on quietly stealing.

I think, in a school of this kind, the teachers should explain all these things to you. You spend an hour in a class reading mathematics or geography. Why not spend ten minutes out of that time in discussing these problems? As you begin to talk them
over, the teachers as well as the students become intelligent. I am not saying that the teachers are not intelligent, but they become more intelligent.

Question: What is a soul?

Krishnamurti: You think you have a soul, don’t you? How do you know? You see, that is one of your difficulties. You accept things from your parents, and you repeat them again and again, and you say, ‘Yes, I have got a soul.’

What is a soul? Let us go into it slowly, step by step, and you will see something. In Banaras, which is a city of the dead, so many people die. You have also seen a dead bird. The leaf on a tree, which is green, lovely, dancing, tender, withers and is blown away. Seeing all this, man says, ‘Everything goes, everything disappears, nothing is permanent.’ Black hair becomes gray; early in life you can walk ten miles or more, but later on, you can walk only two or three miles. A tree which has lived for two or three hundred years is struck by lightning and disappears.

There are trees in California which are three to five thousand years old, yet they too will die. Everything disappears; very few things are permanent.

Seeing this extraordinary state of impermanence, man

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Chapter 6

says, ‘There must be something permanent, something which does not die, which is not corrupted by time.’ And he begins to invent things that have permanency, creating out of his own mind God, the soul, atma, paramatma and so on. He himself sees that he is impermanent, so he longs for something which is permanent, which will never die, which no thief can take away. So his mind speculates, and in his fear he invents, he imagines. He says there is a soul which cannot be destroyed. He says, ‘My body may go, I may die, I may be eaten away by worms; but there is something in me which is imperishable.’ He states that, and then he worships that invention; he builds theories round it, he writes books and quarrels about it, but he never finds out for himself if there is really anything permanent. He never says, ‘I know everything is impermanent. I too will die. I too will grow old, and disease and decay will take place. But I want to find out if there is something beyond.

So let me not invent, let me not say there is a soul or there is atma or there is this and that. But let me find out, let me inquire.’ If only I make up my mind to find out, to inquire, then through that inquiry, through understanding my fears, my greed, through knowing myself, I may go deeper and

अतः मैं कल्पनाएँ न करूं, मैं यह न कहूँ कि कोई आत्मा है या जीवात्मा या कुछ और। बिना इस बारे में खोजबीन करूं, पता लगाउं। यदि खोजबीन करने के लिए मैं तैयार हूँ तो इस अन्वेषण के जितने, अपने दर और लोभ आदि को समझकर, अपने आप को समझकर, मैं और गहरे, अधिक गहराई तक जा सकता हूँ और किसी ऐसी चीज़ का पता लगा सकता हूँ, जो केवल शब्दों में नहीं बंध सकती।
deeper and find out something which is beyond mere words.

You say there is character, and that character may be the soul. But what are you? You have certain tendencies, have you not, certain idiosyncrasies, certain ways, certain desires; all that is in you. You say, ‘I am all that, but if I die, what happens to me? There must be something which goes on and on.’ But do not accept anything unless you have searched out, unless you have gone into it yourself. Unfortunately your mind is engaged, and you are not awakening the mind so that it can go into this problem. When you accept, when you believe, you have stopped inquiring. So, to really inquire requires a mind which is very wide awake. Such a mind is not possible if you are following an authority or if there is fear. If you merely accept, you will never find out.

Question: What is joy?

Krishnamurti: A little boy asks, ‘What is joy?’ I wonder why he asks! Either he does not know what joy is—which would be really very sad or he knows what joy is and wants to find out more about it. The boy won’t understand what I am going to say because unfortunately I cannot speak Hindi, but will those who are responsible for that boy please explain carefully and help him to understand his question.
The boy wants to know what joy is. When you see a flower, you have a feeling, have you not? When you see a sunset, when you see a nice person, when you see a beautiful painting, when you walk freely up a mountain and look from the top of the mountain into the valley and see the various shades, the sunshine, the houses, when you see somebody smile, have you not a feeling which you call joy? But the moment you say, ‘I am joyous, I feel joy,’ the thing is gone. Do you follow? The moment you say, ‘I am happy,’ you are no longer happy.

You see, we live in the past; we are already dying all the time; death is always with us. Duration is always our shadow because we are always living in the past moment. That is why we say, ‘I have known joy, and it has gone, and I want to get it back.’ So the problem is to be conscious, without the ‘experiencing’ which is becoming the past.

I am pursuing much too difficult a question. Sorry! When you enjoy something, when you write a poem or read a book, when you dance or do something else, just leave it at that; do not say, ‘I must have more of it.’ Because that will become greed, and therefore it is no longer a joy. Just be happy in the moment. If there is sunshine, enjoy it, do not say, ‘I must have more.’ If there
are clouds, let them be; they also have their beauty. Do not say, `I wish I had a more beautiful day.' What makes you miserable is the demand for more.

You listen to all this and wisely shake your heads, but it does not penetrate, does not go down deep. When you really stop demanding the 'more', when you are no longer acquisitive, joy will come without your seeking.

Question: What is pathos?

Krishnamurti: The boy wants to know what is pathos. I wonder why he is asking such a question. Probably somebody else has put it, through him. I wish the older people would not do that; they are really corrupting the young mind. Boys are not interested in all this, the feeling of sorrow, the feeling of being pathetic, hopeless. I am sure the boy does not feel these things. The boy has his own problems. He wants to know why a bird flies, why there is light on the water, why his teachers or his parents are cruel to him, why he is not liked, why he must study, why he should obey some stupid old man. Those are his problems, not pathos. He only wants to know what God is because it is so much talked of. Do encourage them to ask questions about their own problems.

If you only want to know the meaning of pathos, look it up in a dictionary, and you will
find the meaning: you do not need any explanation or definition from me. Our minds are so easily satisfied with definitions, and we think we have understood. Such a mind is very shallow.

Question: How can one listen to somebody?

Krishnamurti: You listen to somebody if you are interested. If you really want to know how to listen to somebody, you will find out. You are listening now, aren’t you? I want to know how to listen. I ask you and I listen to you because you may tell me something, and from that I will learn, I will know how to listen. There is in that very action, in that very question, an indication of how to listen.

You ask me how to listen. Now, are you listening to what I am saying? Have you ever listened to a bird? Can you listen—not with a great strain, not with great effort, but just listen easily, happily, with interest—so that your whole attention is there?

We do not listen that way, we are only eager to get something out of somebody. When you read, when you talk, you want to get something out of it. So, you never listen easily, happily. And when you do listen, you translate it into what is suitable to you; or you translate it according to what you have already read, thus getting more and more
complicated, never listening peacefully, easily, quietly. Have you ever watched the moon for any length of time? —just watched it, or seen the waters go by, watched them without all the paraphernalia of sitting down and struggling to watch? If you do listen that way, you will hear much more, you will understand much more of what is being said. Even if you have to listen to your mathematics or geography or history, just listen; you will learn much more. And you will also find out if your teacher is teaching you properly, or if he is merely becoming a gramophone record, repeating the same thing over and over again. Listening is a great art which very few of us know.

January 11, 1954

नहीं कि आप तैयार होकर आली-पाली मारकर बैठ गए और देखने की खूब जी-जान से कोशिश करने लगे बल्कि सहजता से, यूं ही कभी देखा है? जब आप इतने ध्यान से सुनते हैं तो आप काफी अधिक सुन पाते हैं, जो कुछ कहा जा रहा है उसे आप बेहतर दंग से समझ पाते हैं। यहां तक कि जब आपको अपने गणित, भूगोल या इतिहास के विषयों को भी सुनना पड़े तो वस सुनें, और आप बहुत कुछ सीख लेंगे। आप यह भी जान लंगे कि आपके अध्यापक ठीक तरह से पढ़ा रहे हैं कि नहीं, या वे बस ग्रामफोन के रिकोर्ड की तरह एक ही बात को दुहरा रहे हैं। ध्यानपूर्वक सुनना एक बहुत बड़ा कला है जिसे हमें से बहुत कम लोग ही जानते हैं।

January 11, 1954

91 जनवरी, 1954