Question: A gentleman asks how far do you agree with Shankara who says, ‘Eliminate the mind completely’?

Krishnamurti: Not having read Shankara, I cannot answer. But I think it is very important to find out for ourselves and not repeat Shankara or Buddha. The difficulty with most of us is that we have read, we know what other people have said, but we do not know at all what we ourselves think. Truth is not something given to you through a book, through a teacher; you must find it out for yourself. Truth is not the ultimate truth but the simple truth of living, the truth of how to solve any problem—which cannot be solved by merely having a revolution on that level.

So, it is very important to find out for ourselves how to think. You cannot think if your mind is burdened with authority, with other beliefs. The truth of the Buddha or of the Christ or of Shankara is not your truth. Truth does not belong to any of us. It must be found. It can only be found when I understand the total process of my mind. For the mind is the result of time, and so long as I am thinking in terms of time, I cannot find truth. So, if you compare what I say with what Shankara or Buddha has said, you will never find the truth of the matter. But you will find the truth of the matter if you can pursue your own mind in operation; that alone is the liberating factor—not an economic or social revolution.
Question: Is there such a thing as an absolute truth, timeless, measureless, and permanent?

Krishnamurti: Is not truth something that is to be found from moment to moment—not a thing which is continuous, absolute, permanent? Those very words absolute, permanent, continuous imply time, and that which is of time cannot be true. That which is true is only from moment to moment, and it cannot be continuous. What is continuous is memory, and memory can project anything, any kind of illusion. But to find what is true, mind must be free from the process of time, from memory, from the experiencer and the experienced. To find out what is truth, the mind must be from moment to moment, without continuity.

Question: You have said that truth is beyond knowledge. Is the knowledge of an unconditioned mind truth or falsehood?

Krishnamurti: I do not understand the question. One of our difficulties is that we want to go into abstractions immediately. We want to know what truth is, we want to know what God is, but we do not know how to live without acquisitiveness. Instead of understanding that, we want to discuss what truth is, but a man who is acquisitive can never find out what truth is. But if I can begin to understand the whole process of acquisition, the demand for the ‘more’, then perhaps, I shall understand what reality is.

Question: ‘To think for oneself is to
think like others.’ Is that so?

Krishnamurti: Is that not life? Is our thinking now so very different from others? To think for oneself is to think like anybody else because we are all patterned after one type or another of belief or disbelief, so we do not think individually, creatively; we all think alike. You think like a Communist, if you are a Communist; if you are a Hindu, you think like a Hindu. To think freely, you have to be aware of thinking alike, to understand all the implications of thinking alike, why you think alike, why you are conditioned. Obviously, to think freely, completely, revolutionarily, means great danger, does it not? You may lose your job.

To think freely is to be unconditioned. But we are all conditioned in our own peculiar limited ways. So, if I know I am conditioned as a Hindu and if I free myself from that conditioning, then only is it possible for me to be entirely revolutionary, to be not like ‘this’ or like ‘that.’ But first I must know that I am conditioned, which very few of us are willing to admit. To know one is conditioned, and to set about freeing the mind from that conditioning, requires a great deal of insight, persistence, constant watchfulness—a watchfulness in which there is no judgment, no comparison. Then you will find the mind becomes very quiet, very still. Then only is it possible for the mind to know what truth is, what freedom is.
Question: Man lives in poverty and fear. The gods of such a society are bread and security. What else can earnest men offer?

Krishnamurti: To bring about a revolution in which bread and security are given to all, is that revolution? Is revolution merely at the economic level? You understand?

We see there is poverty, hunger, every kind of economic misery. Earnest men want to see the necessity for change now. At what level is this change to be brought about? On the economic level only? Or is it necessary to have a total revolution in man’s thinking? If such a total revolution is possible—I say it is possible—that is the only way of solving our problems.

There can be real revolution only when you understand the total process of your being—which is, your thinking, the ways of your living—and cease to be a Hindu or a Christian. When you are a total human being, only then will the economic problem be solved, and not otherwise.

Question: What is personality? How can it be built?

Krishnamurti: You talk about personality as though it were something like building a house. The very desire to build a personality brings about self-enclosure. We are talking of something totally different from building a personality—coat, tie, trousers, and clever talk, all that.

There can be real revolution only when you understand the total process of your being—which is, your thinking, the ways of your living—and cease to be a Hindu or a Christian. When you are a total human being, only then will the economic problem be solved, and not otherwise.
We are talking of something entirely different, not of self-improvement, but of the cessation of the self—the self as a Hindu, the self as a professor, the self as a political or religious leader, the self that says, ‘I must save the country,’ the self that says, ‘I know the voice of God.’ It is that self that must totally cease in order that the world may live.

Question: Agreeing that the mind is to be unconditioned, how is one to achieve it?

Krishnamurti: If you agree that the mind must be unconditioned, how are you to achieve an unconditional mind?

I think most of us see the importance of the mind which is not conditioned. But actually most of us feel that the mind can be made better, with a better state of conditioning. That is one of the great fallacies. The problem is not how your mind and my mind are to be unconditioned but how the conditioning of the mind takes place.

The conditioning of the mind takes place through education, does it not, through tradition, through family, through society, through religion, through belief. But behind tradition, belief, experience, there is a desire: there is a mind that is constantly acquiring, possessing, dominated by desire; it is that which conditions. Then, you will say, ‘How am I to stop desire?’ You cannot. But, if you understand the process of desire, then there is a possibility of desire coming to an end.
These problems are much too complex to be discussed casually. You see again what is happening. We want to deal with abstractions. We do not see the importance of living from moment to moment without authority, without fear, without the desire to find out that one is acting rightly.

To find for oneself from moment to moment the way of living—the way you treat your servants, the way you talk to your superiors, the way you think and feel—it is there that the truth lies, not somewhere behind the Himalayas. But you see, we are not interested in all that. We are interested in discussing Shankara and other deep philosophies; that is an escape. But if I know the workings of my mind, the ways of my heart, then there is a possibility of bringing about a total revolution, and it is that revolution that can bring peace and security to the world.

January 10, 1954

र्ये समस्याएं इतनी जटिल हैं कि इन पर हलके-पुलके ढंग से बातचीत नहीं की जा सकती। आप देख सकते हैं कि हो क्या रहा है। हम कोई शाब्दिक निष्कर्षों पर आधरण करने की बेच्चा करते हैं। हम यह नहीं समझ पा रहे हैं कि विना किसी प्रामाण्य की स्वीकार किए, विना किसी भय के, विना यह जानने की इच्छा रखते हुए कि हमारा आधरण सही है कि नहीं, क्षण-प्रतिक्षण जीना कितना महत्त्वपूर्ण है।

जीवन को हर क्षण आप कैसे जीते हैं, आप अपने नौकरों से कैसा बरतव करते हैं, आप अपने से ऊंचे लोगों से किस ढंग से बोलते हैं, कैसे सोचते और महसूस करते हैं—इस सब में सत्य निहित है—सत्य कहीं दूर हिमालय के उस पार नहीं है। पर आप देख सकते हैं कि इन सारी बातों में हमें कोई स्थिति नहीं होती। हमारी स्थिति शक्ति और दूसरी गहन वास्तविक बातों में होती है, जो कि फलायक के तरीके भर हैं। परतु यदि मैं अपने मन की कार्यग्रस्ती को जान लेता हूं, अपने हद्द के तीर-तीरीयों को समझ लेता हूं तो एक समय क्रांति हो पाने की संभावना होती है, और ऐसी क्रांति ही संसार में शांति और सुरक्षा स्थापित कर सकती है।