Question: Is it wrong to be full of desires and passions?

Krishnamurti: Which is more important, to understand our desires and passions or to condemn them? The moment you use the words wrong or right, the implication is condemnation, is it not? If you are really interested, please follow this to the end. You are trained from childhood to condemn because the older people do so; they have no time, no interest, and condemnation is the easiest way of resolving any problem.

The question is: Is it wrong to have desires and passions? The first thing to see is that any form of condemnation puts an end to every thought or thinking, to every form of investigation and inquiry. A mind which functions in ‘do’s and don’ts is the most stupid mind. Unfortunately, most of us are educated with stupidity; when we can get over that, we can begin to inquire into the whole problem of desire, not if it is right or wrong, but to understand it. Because, if we understand something, then it is no longer a problem to us. If I know how to run a motor, an engine, it is no problem to me; I do not say it is wrong or right, I know how to work it. If I do not know, I do not condemn the motor. The same is the case with desires. It is no use getting confused or frightened, encouraging or condemning them. If I can understand the workings of desire, then the desire is no problem. It is only the fearful attitude towards desire that creates the problem.

Where is this ‘I’? What is desire? यह ‘मैं’ कहां है? इच्छा क्या है? कुप्पा उसकी
Please listen without any condemnation of justification. Desire has to be understood. In the very understanding of it, desire becomes something else, not a thing to be frightened of, to repress.

What is desire? I see a beautiful car, highly polished, new, of the latest model, full of power. There is perception, then there is contact, then sensation and desire. Desire is as simple as that—perception, contact, sensation, and desire. Then with that desire comes the urge to acquire and the identification process—which is, ‘I desire that car.’ Then the whole problem arises whether I should or should not desire, the desire being conditioned or questioned by my background. If you are brought up in America, you are psychologically persuaded, all the time, to possess a car. So your desire to have a car is not a problem. But if your tendency is towards asceticism, towards renunciation, to turn to God, then the problem arises.

Then there is the desire for various forms of beauty, of sensation, for various things for which the mind craves, such as comfort, security, a demand for permanence. We all want permanency—permanency in relationship, permanency in security, in continuity. Then we think there is a permanent God, there is permanent truth, and so on. Such an abstraction becomes theoretical, valueless, academic.
If you can understand this process of desire, which is very complex, very subtle, then there is a possibility of the mind seeing all the significance of desire, all the implications, and going beyond it. But we do not understand the significance of all this, but merely say, ‘This is a right desire,’ ‘That is a wrong desire,’ and ‘The cultivation of right desire is essential.’ If we adopt such an attitude towards desire, then the mind becomes merely an automatic, thoughtless, insensitive mechanism. Therefore, it cannot meet this whole complex problem of living.

Question: I am afraid of death. What is death and how can I cease to be afraid of it?

Krishnamurti: It is very easy to ask a question. There is no yes or no answer to life, but our minds demand yes or no because our minds have been trained in what to think, not how to understand, how to see things. When we say, ‘What is death, and how can I not be afraid of it?’ We want formulas, we want definitions, but we never know how to think about the problem.

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Chapter 17

ending; obviously every organism that is functioning must come to an end. But my mind won’t accept that. So, I begin to invent a creed, a continuity; I want to accept this because I have complete theories, complete conditioning—which is, I continue, there is reincarnation.

We are not disputing whether there is continuity or not, whether there is rebirth or not. That is not the problem. The problem is that even though you have such beliefs, you are still afraid because, after all, there is no certainty, there is always uncertainty. There is always this hankering after an assurance. So, the mind, knowing the ending, begins to have fear, longs to live as long as possible, seeks for more and more palliatives. The mind also believes in continuity after death.

What is continuity? Does not continuity imply time, not mere chronological time by a watch, but time as a psychological process? I want to live. Because I think it is a continual process without any ending, my mind is always adding, gathering to itself in the hope of continuity. The mind thinks in terms of time, and if it can have continuity in time, then it is not afraid.

What is immortality? The continuity of the ‘me’ is what we call immortality—the ‘me’ at a higher level, the atma, or whatever you call it. You hope that the ‘me’ will continue. The ‘me’ is still within the field of thought, is it not? The ‘me’, however superior you may think it to be, is the product of thought and that is conditioned, is born of time. Sirs, do
not merely follow the logic of what I say but see the full significance of it. Really, immortality is not of time, and therefore not of the mind, not a thing born out of my longings, my demands, my fears, my urges.

One sees that life has an ending, a sudden ending; what lived yesterday may not live today, and what lives today may not live tomorrow. Life has certainly an ending. It is a fact, but we won’t admit it. You are different from yesterday. Various things, various contacts, reactions, compulsions, resistances, influences, change ‘what was’ or put an end to it. A man who is really creative must have an ending, and he accepts it. But we won’t accept it because our minds are so accustomed to the process of accumulation. We say, ‘I have learned this today, I learned that yesterday.’ We think only in terms of time, in terms of continuity. If we do not think in terms of continuity, there will be an ending, there will be dying, and we would see things as they are, clearly, simply, directly.

We do not admit the fact of ending because our minds seek in continuity, security—in the family, in property, in our profession, in any job we do. Therefore, we are afraid. It is only a mind that is free from the acquisitive pursuit of security, free from the desire to continue, from the process of continuity, that will know what immortality is, but the mind that is seeking personal immortality, the ‘me’ wanting to continue, will never know what immortality is; such a mind will never know the significance of fear and death, and go beyond.

Question: ‘Thinking does not solve the problem, it is its product.’ Is this not a trap?
piece of thinking, or is this different from the thinking which you impugn?

Krishnamurti: When one sees the limitations of reason, one goes beyond reason. But one must know how to think, how to reason. But if you do not know how to reason, how to think, you can never go beyond it. Most of us do not know what thinking is; we only know what to think, which is entirely different. But to know the extraordinary complexity of the mind, which cannot be learned from another, to find out for yourself how the mind works, you have really to observe. What you learn of psychology or philosophy in a college or in a lecture hall is not a living thing, it is a dead thing. But if you observe your own thoughts and actions in daily living—when you talk to a servant or to your wife or child, when you react to beauty—if you see your motives in action, then, out of that observation, you will know the various barriers of your mind, how the mind deceives itself, how the mind twists, in the way it reasons. Seeing all that, you go beyond all thought, beyond reason, and there is freedom.

This is not a thing to be casually interested in or casually repeated. Some of you who have heard me may say, ‘Poor fellow! He does not know what he is talking about. How can thinking come to an end? If there were no thinking, how could there be the questions that the mind puts in order to understand the whole complex...
It is very important to find out how we think. Unfortunately, most of our educationists teach you what to think, and you merely repeat it. If you can repeat either in Sanskrit or in English or in any other language, you think you are marvellously learned. But to find out, to discover, the ways in which your mind works, and to speak of what you have discovered, without repeating what another has said, is a tremendous thing; that is the indication of initiative; that is the beginning of creative living.

Unfortunately, in India, we are clerks from the high to the low; we have been trained in what to think. That is why we are never revolutionary in the deep creative sense. We are merely gramophone records, playing the same tune. Therefore, there is never true discovery.

Question: What is the significance of life?

Krishnamurti: The significance of life is living. Do we really live, is life worth living when there is fear, when our whole life is trained in imitation, in copying? In following authority, is there living? Are you living when you follow somebody, even if he is the greatest saint or the greatest politician or the greatest scholar?

If you observe your own ways, you will see that you do nothing but follow somebody or another. This process of following is what we call ‘living,’ and then at the end of it you say, ‘What is the significance of life?’ To you, life has significance now; the significance can come only when you put away all
this authority. It is very difficult to put away authority.

What is freedom from authority? You can break a law. That is not the freedom from authority. But there is freedom in understanding the whole process, how the mind creates authority, how each one of us is confused and therefore wants to be assured that he is living the right kind of life. Because we want to be told what to do, we are exploited by gurus, spiritual as well as scientific. We do not know the significance of life as long as we are copying, imitating, following.

How can one know the significance of life when all that one is seeking is success? That is our life; we want success, we want to be completely secure inwardly and outwardly, we want somebody to tell us that we are doing right, that we are following the right path leading to salvation, to moksha, and so on. All our life is following a tradition, the tradition of yesterday or of thousands of years, and we make every experience into an authority to help us to achieve a result. So, we do not know the significance of life. All that we know is fear—fear of what somebody says, fear of dying, fear of not getting what we want, fear of committing wrong, fear of doing good. Our minds are so confused, caught in theory, that we cannot describe what significance life has to us.

Life is something extraordinary. When the questioner asks, ‘What is the significance of life?’ he wants a definition. All that he will know is the

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Chapter 17

definition, mere words, and not the deeper significance, the extraordinary richness, the sensitivity to beauty, the immensity of living.

Question: How can peace be established in the world? We and the whole world are trying to be in a peaceful atmosphere, but the dangers of another world war are approaching towards us.

Krishnamurti: We want to live in peace. Do you? Don’t you compete with your neighbour? Don’t you want a job as much as your neighbour? Don’t you hate? Don’t you call yourself an Indian with all the patriotic nonsense of conflicts? How can you have peace when you are doing the opposite thing, the thing which is contrary to peace? As long as you call yourself a Hindu; a Muslim, a Christian, or a Communist, you will never have peace in the world.

Peace is in the layman. As long as one is following one party, political or otherwise, opposed to another party, as long as politics is merely a division of power, obviously you will have no peace in the world. Politicians are not concerned with people, they are concerned with power, and as long as the party system exists, there cannot be any peace. This does not mean that there must be only one party. Parties really are not concerned with people at all; they are concerned with ideas of how to give people food, and therefore there is little action in the matter of actually giving food.

So, as long as we are pursuing the path of war, as long as we have armies,
police, and lawyers, we will have wars. We are talking all the time about nonviolence, and yet we support armies. On the one hand we are prepared in ourselves, through our present day education, to hate one another, and on the other hand we want peace. In ourselves, we are in contradiction, each one of us—the nation, the group, the race. There can be peace in the world only when that contradiction in each one of us is dissolved. What is essential is for each one of us to think out for oneself, to inquire, to search out. Repetition of slogans or the carrying of flags are of little use.

We want to be nationalistic, we want to have our flag. Because the individual, through identifying (judav) with the greater, gets a satisfaction, gets a sense of security. That is what is being done in India, America, Russia, and elsewhere. In schools and universities, our education is nothing but the cultivation of this hatred and aggressive acquisitiveness. So, we are preparing for complete and utter destruction.

Peace is surely something which is not a reaction to a particular system or society, to a particular organization, to ideas or action. Peace is something entirely different. It comes into being, surely, when the whole total process of man is understood, which is the understanding of myself. This self-knowledge cannot be had from a book, cannot be learned from another. When there is love in your heart, and when you observe and understand yourself every moment of your life, truth comes into being, and out of that truth comes peace.