

Ujjwal's Birthday

Modern Krishna's (J. Krishnamurti's) dialogue with G.H. — a Professor at a University who came with a friend of his.

They talked of the war and its revolutionary benefits, how it was going to change the world, for the better, of course! There was a certain jubilation in their voices over the world's catastrophe, for it promised them a happier world. They talked excitedly between themselves, throwing answers at each other, encouraging each other. Then the professor turned and explained that they had come at the insistence of a friend and that though he had been a pacifist during the last war, this war being different demanded quite a different attitude and action. This time killing the enemy was justified, as they were utterly ruthless, and if they were not put down, there would be centuries of Barbarism. This time Europe must be rid of the terror. And though he had advocated peaceful methods, now he was all for destroying the enemy. There was fanaticism in his voice, cruelty of gesture, and a fund of scholarly language.

As we remained silent, he asked, 'Is it not right to destroy the enemy? Even the Bhagavad Gita advocates it. This war is justified because the enemy is evil.'

Why did you, sir, come here?, we asked. As you appear to be certain in your attitude towards those whom you call the enemy, why then, if we may ask, have you come? Is it because you wish to spend an hour in argumentative discussion or because you are not wholly certain of your attitude? If you wish merely to discuss, then it would be profitless, but if we wish to clarify our attitude, then it is another matter.

He said he had not come to waste my time in futile discussion, and perhaps in talking the matter over, there might be modifications in his point of view.

If to overcome evil we adopt evil methods, we ourselves become evil and so perpetuate evil. To fight wrong with wrong gives strength to that which is wrong. So we must find the right means to overcome the evil, the wrong. Right means alone will create the right ends. Is not killing wrong at any time? Is it an absolute, final value — not to kill — or a value to be modified, changed according to the changing circumstances? Is it to be regarded as a sensory value, based on gratification, pleasure or fear, in which case there is no permanent, essential value and therefore it is a product of evil and confusion? If a value is constantly changing, then it ceases to be a value, and sensory values are ever in flux, and any structure built on those values has no permanency and therefore breeds much confusion and wrong. You do not approve of killing at one time, and at another you are determined to kill; and thus your action, being valueless, is a product of ignorance and sorrow. Is to kill or not to kill determined by reason, by ideologies, by principles? Are not the values of our reason shaped through our passions, through our immediate needs and fears, through our conditionings? Is not reason itself unreliable, contradictory, and can there be any permanent value in the things of mind? When the mind is guided by a principle, then it becomes a slave of its own creation, and in this slavery there is no peace, there is no creative understanding and joy. Reason is excellent, but it must transcend itself. It must become still to know love, and love has no value. When there is love, all violence ceases; being without value, it is infinite. In it there is neither the enemy nor the friend, but it brings its own order and clarity. It is its own eternity. The professor said, 'You are asking the impossible.'

Therefore you will have wars, strife, and misery. It is not impossible; you have made the most hideous thing possible — this mass murder. If you give your whole being, to the other, which you call the impossible, as wholeheartedly as you do to war, then you will find that through goodwill and love the tremendously complex problems can be solved. 'Do you think', he asked, 'that everyone is capable of this great transformation?'

Who is this whom you call everyone? You and I, surely. If you apply your mind and heart, do you think you cannot bring about a transformation in yourself? Is there not a greater certainty of this transformation in yourself than in trying to bring about a fundamental change in another? You can keep your own house clean instead of being concerned with another's. In transforming yourself you will affect another, for you are the other. To go far we must begin near. You are the nearest.

We sat very still for some time without talking.

Jai Krishnamurti