“There must be a revolution in our thinking”
—J. Krishnamurti

J. Krishnamurti (1895-1986) remains one of the greatest, most highly-respected philosophers and teachers of modern times. In this series of lectures, given in the U.S. and various cities throughout the world in the 1950s, he again confronts the habitual, projection-making mind, which fails to see what is while it absorbs itself in belief and illusion.

What can bring about this radical change in our minds? the author asks again and again. His insightful answers, invite his readers to question the basic assumptions that govern their lives. Adjunct topics covered in these essays include:

- the process of change at all levels
- self-awareness
- and freedom from slavery to the mind

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The Revolution from Within

J. Krishnamurti

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Contents

Foreword by David Skitt ................................................... vii

TALKS 1952
Ojai, California  3 August ................................. 1
                9 August ................................. 14
                23 August ................................. 25

TALKS 1953
Bombay        4 March ........................................ 38
London        9 April ........................................ 56
Ojai, California 4 July ...................................... 70

TALKS 1955
Amsterdam  26 May ........................................ 84
London     25 June ........................................ 99

TALKS 1956
Madanapalle, India 26 February ...................... 114
Brussels     24 June ........................................ 127
                25 June ........................................ 140
Hamburg      6 September ................................ 153
New Delhi    31 October ................................. 165
Contents

TALKS 1956 (continued)
Madras 26 December ....................... 181

TALKS 1957
Colombo, Sri Lanka 23 January .................... 193
27 January .................... 209

TALKS 1958
Poona, India 21 September .................... 224
Madras 26 October .................... 240
12 November .................... 254
Bombay 28 December .................... 266

TALKS 1959
Madras 6 December .................... 277
13 December .................... 288
Bombay 23 December .................... 299
Running like a gold thread throughout these talks Krishnamurti gave in the nineteen-fifties is the subject of change. Most of us would agree with the postulate in science that change is the only permanent factor of the universe, and evolutionary biology tells us that the survival of a species, including our own, depends on genetic changes that best adapt to the demands of a constantly changing environment. The changes that occur in our bodies are also ones that we take for granted.

We have no difficulty then in acknowledging change in what we call matter. But what about change in the nature of the mind and in human behaviour? We know that there is often widespread support for our politicians to change, but this usually ends up in replacing them. Yet such is the power of the very word change that where no democratic process prevails or is discredited, whole societies can be overthrown by revolutionaries simply chanting the word like a mantra. The results, in the twentieth century, proved, as we know, to be calamitous. Trying to change society while leaving the individuals who constitute society unchanged is something that we now see as a very dangerous error.
Foreword

Bringing the notion of change closer to home, to person- 
al relationships, most of us have said or heard it said, ‘You can’t change human nature.’ Or, ‘You have to take me as I am.’ Or, ‘He [or she] will never change’. And when we do change occasionally, it seems mostly to be under the pressure of events or at the urging of others.

So there seems to be something of a discordance here. The physical universe changes all the time. And a species, including the human one will have a better chance of surviving if it changes genetically in a way that fits the environment. But we seem to assume that a change in the human mind, particularly of a fundamental kind, though found desirable when we look around us and within ourselves, is impractical or too demanding. We may even find it somewhat disturbing. Also, we have no clear sense of how far such a change may go.

How does Krishnamurti approach this issue? Perhaps disconcertingly for someone reading him for the first time, he states as ‘obvious’ that if we are a serious human being we must be deeply concerned with bringing about a radical transformation of our relationships, our way of thinking, and understanding of religion. Now, first of all, he asks, do we see that such a transformation is essential? If we do not, he argues, we need simply to observe the state of the world, its conflict, violence, confusion, and massive and avoidable human suffering. What, he asks, is the responsibility of a human being who sees that?

Well, a critic might object, I’m just an ordinary person, and all that nastiness going on out there has nothing to do with me. Krishnamurti challenges that objection head-on. First, he says, we cannot afford to be ‘ordinary’ any more,
the challenge of the world is too great. Second, psychologically speaking, none of us are on the sidelines of the world, we are all in the thick of it—‘we are the world.’ Human problems are not personal but universal.

So what can bring about a radical change in our minds? Krishnamurti approaches this question by inviting us to first observe our state of mind as it is now, to watch it without condemnation or judgement—‘like a child that one loves . . . wandering into the depths of one’s mind without calculation or intention.’ Only when aware of the limitations of thought, of the known, of its time-bound quality, of the stunted shaping of us by the past and by our cultural and religious conditioning, can there be a new state of mind.

This is only one of the many aspects of psychological transformation that are covered in these talks, and clearly this preface can only single out a few. But again and again Krishnamurti maintains that change cannot be brought about by any act of will, of wanting to be or become somebody or something. There is irrefutable logic here—if my mind malfunctions, does not work well in certain ways, then what I project as an objective will inevitably reflect this. So clear observation of one’s mind, seeing ‘what is’, is a first and essential step.

This ability to see ‘what is’ in oneself, another, and in life as a whole, releases, Krishnamurti says, ‘a creative fire.’ ‘One has to understand “what is”, before one can perceive that which is other than “what is.”’

To undertake this psychological journey is ‘hard work.’ It requires ‘a great deal of enquiry, penetration, and self-knowledge.’ It is also meditation, which is ‘something you
Foreword

have to do as you breathe, as you think, as you live.’ But it is a pilgrimage open to us all. ‘If we can take this journey together, and simply observe as we go along the extraordinary width and depth and beauty of life, then out of this observation may come a love . . . which is a state of being free of all demand . . . and we may perhaps be awakened to something far more significant than the boredom and frustration, the emptiness and despair of our daily lives.’

A first-time reader of Krishnamurti may be surprised to find that he often asks more questions of us than he gives answers. He invites us to ‘test out’ in daily life what he says and to find out for ourselves whether it is true or not. So there is no telling us what to do, no parading of assertions that have a take-it-or-leave-it quality, no usurping of our own ability to unravel the tangle that our lives may be. In times when human life is trivialized and brutalized in so many ways, it is as though Krishnamurti declares its true worth and extraordinary potential. And perhaps what is needed for its survival?

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Perhaps we can continue with what we were considering yesterday—the problem of change, of fundamental or radical transformation, and how it is to be brought about. I think it is very important to go into this question fully, not only this morning, but in the subsequent talks that are going to take place. I do not know if you have further considered the matter; but the more one regards the problem, the more one takes it into consideration, the vaster and more complicated one discovers it to be. We see the importance and the absolute necessity of changing—changing ourselves in our relationships, in our activities, in the process of our thinking, which includes the mere accumulation of knowledge. Yet when one considers the implications of change, one sees how, though we attempt to change ourselves, there is no radical transformation. I am using the word ‘transformation’ in its simple meaning, not in any grandiose sense, the super-physical, and all the rest of it.

We see the necessity of change, not only in world politics, but in our own religious attitude, in our social relationships, in our individual, everyday contacts with the familiar, with each other; but the more we attempt to
change on the small scale, the more superficial our thinking becomes and the greater the mischief in action. The closer we look at the problem, the more we are aware of this. Seeing the necessity of change, we project ideals, and according to that pattern we hope to transform ourselves. I am narrow, petty, superstitious, shallow, and I project the ideal of something vast, significant, deep; and I am continually struggling, adjusting, moulding myself according to that pattern. Now, is that change? Let us look at it a little closely. When I project an ideal and try to live up to that ideal, constantly adapting myself to a particular pattern of thought, does that process bring about the fundamental change which you and I recognize as essential? But first of all, do we in fact recognize that it is essential to bring about a fundamental change in our orientation, in our outlook, in our values, in our contacts, in the manner of our behaviour in the way of our thinking? Do we see the importance of that? Or do we merely accept it as an ideal and try to do something about it?

Surely, it is obvious to any person who is at all thoughtful that there must be a revolution in our thinking and in our action because everywhere there is chaos, misery. In our selves and outwardly there is confusion, there is an incessant striving without any release, any hope; and perhaps, being aware of it, we think that by creating an ideal, a projection outside of us of something which we are not, or by following an example, a leader, a saviour, or a particular religious teaching, we can bring about a fundamental change. Of course, in following a pattern, certain superficial modifications take place, but obviously that does not bring about a radical transformation. And yet most of our
existence is spent in that way—trying to live up to something, trying to bring about a change in our attitude, to change according to the pattern which we have projected as an ideal, as a belief.

Now, let us find out if the pursuit of an ideal really does bring about a change in us, or only a modified continuity of what has been. I do not know if this is a problem to you. If you are satisfied with merely trying to live up to an ideal, then there is no problem—though that has its own problem of constant conflict between what you are and what you should be. This struggle, this ceaseless effort to adjust to a pattern, is still within the field of the mind, is it not? Surely, there is a radical transformation only when we can jump, as it were, from the process of time into something which is not of time. We will go into that as we discuss.

For most of us, change implies the continuation of ourselves in a modified form. If we are dissatisfied with a particular pattern of ideas, of rituals, of conditioning, we throw it aside and pick up the same pattern in a different milieu, a different colour, with different rituals, different words. Instead of Latin it is Sanskrit, or some other language, but it is still the old pattern repeated over and over and over again; and within this pattern we think we are moving, changing. Because we are dissatisfied with what we are, we go from one teacher to another. Seeing confusion about us and in ourselves, seeing perpetual wars, ever-increasing destruction, devastation and misery, we want some haven, some peace; and if we can find a refuge that gives us a sense of security, a sense of permanency, with that we are satisfied.

So, when the mind projects an idea and clings to it, struggles towards it, surely that is not change, that is not
transformation, that is not revolution, because it is still within the field of the mind, the field of time. To clear away all that, we must be conscious of what we are doing, we must be aware of it. And it must be cleared away, must it not? Because, with all that burden, with all that impetus of the mind, obviously we cannot find the other; and without experiencing the other, do what we will, there will be no change. But what generally happens? We say that individually we can do nothing, we are helpless, therefore let us do something politically to bring about peace in the world; let us have faith in the vision of one world, of a classless society, and so on and so on. The intellect worships that vision, and to carry out that vision we sacrifice ourselves and others. Politically, that is what is happening. We say that, in order to end wars, we must have one society, and to create that society we are willing to destroy everything—which is using wrong means to a right end. All this is still within the field of the mind.

Also, are not all our religions man-made, that is, mind-made? Our rituals, our symbols, our disciplines, though they may temporarily alleviate, bring about an uplift, a feeling of well-being, are they not all within the field of time? When we regard the political and religious ideals by means of which we hope to bring a change, to educate and discipline ourselves to be less selfish, to be less ambitious, to be more considerate, more virtuous, to renounce, not to acquire so much and so on—when we look at this whole pattern, do we not see that it is a process of the mind? The mind, which is also the will, is the source of effort, of intentions, of conscious and unconscious motives, it is the centre of the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’, and whatever it may do, however
far it may endeavour to go, can that centre ever bring about a fundamental change within itself?

I want to change, but not superficially, because I see that in the process of superficial change there is mischievous action taking place. So, what am I to do? Isn’t that your problem also, if you are really serious about all this? One may be a communist, one may be a socialist, one may be a reformer or a religious person, but that is the core of our problem, is it not? Though we may have a hundred explanations of man, of his responses and activities, or of the universe, until we change fundamentally, no explanation has any value. I see that, not just casually, I see the importance of a radical change in myself. And how is that to be brought about? There is revolution only when the mind has ceased to function within the field of time, for only then is there a new element which is not of time. It is that new element which brings about a deep, lasting revolution. You can call that element God, Truth, or what you will—the name you give to it is of no importance. But until I touch it, until I have a sense of that which will cleanse me completely, until I have faith in that which is not self-induced, not of the mind, obviously every change is a mere modification, every reformation has to be further reformed, and so on—infinitesimal mischief.

So, what is one to do? Have you ever asked yourself this question? Not that I am asking you or you are asking me; but if we are at all intelligent, if we are at all aware of our own problems and those of the world, isn’t this the first question to put to ourselves? Not what kind of beliefs, religions, sects, new teachers we should have—they are all so utterly empty and futile. But surely, this is
the fundamental question that one ought to put to oneself—how to bring about a change which is not of time, which is not a matter of evolution, which is not a matter of slow growth. I can see that if I exercise will, control, if I discipline myself, there are certain modifications; I am better or worse, I am changed a little bit. Instead of being bad tempered or angry or vicious or jealous I am quiet; I have repressed all that, I have held it down. Every day I practise a certain virtue, repeat certain words, go to a shrine and repeat certain chants, and so on and so on. They all have a pacifying effect; they produce certain changes but these changes are still of the mind, they are still within the field of time, are they not? My memory says, ‘I am this, and I must become that.’ Surely, such activity is still self-centred; though I deny greed, in seeking non-greed I am still within the self-enclosing process of the ‘me’. And I can see that it leads nowhere, do what I will; though there may be change, as long as my thinking is held within the process of the ‘me’, there is no freedom from struggle, pain.

I do not know if you have enquired into this. The problem of change is very important, is it not? And can this change be brought about through a process of thinking, through disciplines, through rituals, through various forms of sacrifice, immolation, denial, suppression?—which, if you observe, are all tactics, designs of the mind. However much the self, the ‘me’, struggles to be free, can it ever be free? Whatever effort it makes, can it ever absolve itself from its own activities? If it cannot, then what is it to do? I hope you see the problem as I see it. You may translate it differently in words, but that is the core of our problem.
Now, since we do not see any outlet, any way of release from the process of the ‘me’, we begin to worship reason, the intellect. We reject everything else and say that the mind is the only important thing, the more intellectual, the more cunning, the more erudite, the better. That is why knowledge has become so important to us. Even though we may be worshippers of God, essentially we have denied God, because our gods are the images of our own minds; our rituals, our churches—the whole business is still within the field of the mind. We say, ‘Since there is only the mind, let us make man according to the mind, according to reason.’ Our society, our relationships, everything we do conforms to the pattern of the mind; and whoever does not conform is either liquidated or otherwise denied.

Seeing all this, are we not concerned to find out how we can jump over that intangible barrier between the process of time and the timeless, between the projections of the mind and that which is not of the mind? If that is really an earnest question which we have put to ourselves, if it has become an urgent problem, then surely we will lay aside the obvious activities of the mind: the ideals, the rituals, the churches, the accumulation of knowledge—we will completely wash them out of our system. It is through negation that we will find the other thing, not through direct approach, and I can negate only when I begin to understand the ways of my own mind and see that I seek refuge, that I am acquisitive, that there is not a single moment when the mind is really quiet. The incessant chattering, the images, the things that I have acquired and hold on to, the words, the names, the memories, the escapes—of all that I have to be aware, have I not? Because, with that
burden, which is of time, how can I experience something which is timeless? So I must purge myself completely of all that, which means I must be alone—not alone in an ivory tower, but there must be that aloneness in which I see all the processes, the eddies of the mind. Then, as I observe, as I become more and more aware and begin to put aside without effort the things of the mind, I find that the mind becomes quiet; it is no longer curious, searching, groping struggling, creating and pursuing images. All those things have dropped away, and the mind becomes very quiet, it is as nothing. This is the thing that cannot be taught. By listening a hundred times to this statement, you are not going to get it; if you do, then you are mesmerized by words. It is a thing that must be experienced, that must be directly tasted, but it’s no good hovering at the edge of it.

So, when the mind is still, not made still by self-discipline, by control, by greed to experience something which is not of the mind, when the mind is really still, then you will find that there comes a state which brings a revolution in our outlook, in our attitude. This revolution is not brought about by the mind, but by something else. For this revolution to take place, the mind must be quiet; it must be literally as nothing, stripped, empty; and I assure you, it is not an easy job. That emptiness is not a state of day-dreaming; you cannot get it by merely sitting still for ten hours or twenty-four hours of the day and trying to hold on to some thing. It can come only when the mind has understood its own processes, the conscious as well as the unconscious—which means one must be everlastingly aware. And the difficulty for most of us is inertia. That is another problem which we will not go into now. But the
moment we begin to inquire and see the importance of change, we must go into all this. That means we must be willing to strip ourselves of everything to find the other; and when once we have even a slight glimmering of the other, which is not of the mind, then that will operate. That is the only revolution, that is the only thing that can give us hope, that can put an end to wars, to this destructive relationship.

Question: How is one who is superficial to become serious?

Krishnamurti: Let us find out together. First of all, we must be aware that we are superficial, must we not? And are we? What does it mean to be superficial? Essentially, to be dependent, does it not? To depend on stimulation, to depend on challenge, to depend on another, to depend psychologically on certain values, certain experiences, certain memories—does not all that make for superficiality? When I depend on going to church every morning, or every week, in order to be uplifted, in order to be helped, does that not make me superficial? If I have to perform certain rituals to maintain my sense of integrity, or to regain a feeling which I may once have had, does that not make me superficial? And does it not make me superficial when I give myself over to a country, to a plan, or to a particular political group? Surely, this whole process of dependence is an evasion of myself; this identification with the greater is the denial of what I am. But I cannot deny what I am; I must understand what I am, and not try to identify myself with the universe, with God, with a particular political party, or what you will. All this leads to shallow thinking, and
from shallow thinking there is activity which is everlastingly mischievous, whether on a worldwide scale, or on the individual scale.

So, first of all, do we recognize that we are doing these things? We don’t; we justify them. We say, ‘What shall I do if I don’t do these things? I’ll be worse off; my mind will go to pieces. Now, at least, I am struggling towards something better.’ And the more we struggle, the more superficial we are. So I have to see that first, have I not? And that is one of the most difficult things—to see what I am, to acknowledge that I am stupid, that I am shallow, that I am narrow, that I am jealous. If I see what I am, if I recognize it, then with that I can start. Surely, a shallow mind is a mind that escapes from what it is; and not to escape requires arduous investigation, the denial of inertia. The moment I know I am shallow, there is already a process of deepening—if I don’t do anything about the shallowness. If the mind says, ‘I am petty, and I am going to go into it, I am going to understand the whole of this pettiness, this narrowing influence’, then there is a possibility of transformation; but a petty mind, acknowledging that it is petty and trying to be non-petty by reading, by meeting people, by travelling, by being incessantly active like a monkey, is still a petty mind.

Again, you see, there is a real revolution only if we approach this problem rightly. The right approach to the problem gives an extraordinary confidence which I assure you moves mountains—the mountains of one’s own prejudices, conditionings. So, being aware of a shallow mind, do not try to become deep. A shallow mind can never know great depths. It can have plenty of knowledge, informa-
tion, it can repeat words—you know, the whole paraphernalia of a superficial mind that is active. But if you know that you are superficial, shallow, if you are aware of the shallowness and observe all its activities without judging, without condemning, then you will soon see that the shallow thing has disappeared entirely without your action upon it. But that requires patience, watchfulness, not an eager desire for a result, for a reward, for achievement. It is only a shallow mind that wants an achievement, a result. The more you are aware of this whole process, the more you will discover the activities of the mind, but you must observe them without trying to put an end to them, because the moment you seek an end, you are again caught in the duality of the ‘me’ and the ‘not-me’—which is another problem.

Question: I read the Buddha because it helps me to think clearly about my own problems, and I read you and some others in the same way. You seem to suggest that such help is superficial and does not bring about a radical transformation. Is this a casual suggestion on your part, or do you mean to indicate that there is something very much deeper which cannot be discovered through reading?

Krishnamurti: Do you read in order to be helped? Do you read in order to confirm your own experience? Do you read in order to amuse yourself, to relax, to give your mind, this constantly active mind, a rest? The questioner says he reads because it helps him to solve his problems. Are you really helped by reading?—it does not matter who it is. When I go out seeking help, am I helped? I may
J. Krishnamurti

find temporary relief, a momentary crack through which I can see the way; but surely, to find help, I must go within myself, must I not? Books can give you information about how to move towards the door which will solve your problems, but you must walk, must you not? You see, that is one of our difficulties—we want to be helped. We have innumerable problems, devastating, destructive problems in which we are caught, and we want help from somebody: the psychologist, the doctor, the Buddha, whoever it is. The very desire to be helped creates the image to which we become a slave; so, the Buddha, or Krishnamurti, or x becomes the authority. We say, ‘He helped me once, and my goodness, I am going back to him again’—which indicates the shallow mind, the mind that is seeking help. Such a mind created its own problems and then wants somebody else to solve them, or it goes to somebody to help it to uncover the process of its own thinking. So, unconsciously, the one who seeks help creates the authority: the authority of the book, the authority of the State, the authority of the dictator, the authority of the teacher, of the priest, you know, the whole business of it. And can I be helped, can you be helped? I know we would like to be. Fundamentally, can you and I be helped? Surely, it is only by understanding ourselves patiently, quietly, unobtrusively, that we begin to discover, experience something which is not of our own creation, and it is that which brings about help, which begins to clear the field of our vision. But you cannot ask for that help; it must come to you darkly, uninvited. But when we are suffering, when we are in real psychological pain, we want somebody to give us a hand; and so the church, the particular friend,
the teacher, or the State, becomes all-important. For that help, we are willing to become slaves.

So we have to go into this problem of how we are caught in our own sorrows, we have to understand and clear it up for ourselves; for Reality, God, or what you will, is not to be experienced through another. It must be experienced directly, it must come to you without any intermediary; but a mind that is seeking help, that is petitioning, that is asking, begging—such a mind can never find the other, because it has not understood its own problems, it has not studied the process of its own activities. It is only when the mind is quiet that there is light. That light is not to be worshipped by the mind; the mind must be utterly silent, not asking, not hoping for experience. It must be completely still. Only then is there a possibility of that light which will dispel our darkness.
The last two times we met, we were considering the problem of change and I would like, this afternoon, to go into the question of power, and whether power, as we know it, can bring about a fundamental psychological transformation within oneself. The difficulty in going into this problem lies, I think, in understanding the usage of words. That is one of our major difficulties, is it not? Words like God, love, discipline, power, communist, American, Russian, have a very specific psychological significance in our lives, and when they are touched upon, we react nervously, emotionally; there is a psychological response. So, if we are to go further into this problem of change, I think we also have to consider the fact that certain words have a psychological influence on each one of us. We have built about ourselves so many verbal barriers, and it is very difficult to transcend those barriers and see the significance that lies beyond the word. After all, words are a means of communication; but if particular words cause a neurological or psychological reaction in us, then it becomes very difficult to communicate. And surely, this is another of our difficulties—that in trying to under-
stand the problem of change, we have to strip ourselves of all ideals; because, conformity to a particular pattern, however reasonable, however logical and well thought out, is not a change at all, is it? Change implies a complete transformation, not the continuity of a modified thought. So there are many factors to be considered in this whole problem of how to bring about a fundamental change, not only psychologically, within ourselves, but also outwardly.

I see the necessity of certain changes in myself; and I can either deal with the problem superficially or go into it very profoundly and find out what are its implications. When I see that I have to change, that it is a necessity, I generally exercise the will, do I not? Any process of change implies resistance, the application of effort, which is will. With that we are familiar. That is, I perceive in myself a state which is socially not good, or a state which brings conflict within me, and I want to go beyond it; I want to break down that particular quality or condition, so I suppress it, or I discipline myself to resist it, which necessitates a certain power of the will. We are accustomed to that process, are we not? So we think power in different forms—social, political, economic, inward, spiritual and so on—is a necessity.

Now, is not this whole process of will a self-centred activity in which there is no release from the condition in which I am caught, in which the mind is held, but only a covering up and a continuity of the same thing in a modified form? And our education, our reforms, our religious thinking, our psychological struggles are all based on this process, are they not? I am this, and I want to become that, and in becoming that, I must employ a certain force of will;
there must be resistance, control. And is not this process of control, of discipline, a self-centred activity which engenders a sense of power? The more you discipline, control yourself the more there is of a certain concentrated activity, but is not that activity still within the field of the self, of the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’? And is Reality, God, or what you will, the outcome of self-centred activity? Yet do not all your religious books, your teachers, the various sects to which you belong—do they not all imply, fundamentally, that change can be brought about through compulsion, through conformity, through the desire for success, that is, to achieve a certain result? But is not that whole process an activity of the ‘me’ in its desire to be something more? And can we, realizing it, bring that process to an end?

I do not know if you see the problem as I see it. All this activity, however reasonable, however noble or well calculated, is still within the field of the mind; it is the activity of the self, the result of desire, of the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’, is it not? And can the self, that consciousness which is always within the limits of the mind and therefore always in conflict—can that self ever go beyond itself? Will that self not always create conflict between individuals, and therefore between groups, between nations?

Now, it seems to me very important to understand this, but is it a problem to each one of us? We see that a radical change is necessary in society, in ourselves, in our individual and group relationships, and how is it to be brought about? If change is through conformity to a pattern projected by the mind, through a reasonable, well-studied-out plan, then it is still within the field of the mind; therefore, whatever the mind calculates becomes the end, the vision,
for which we are willing to sacrifice ourselves and others. If you maintain that, then it follows that we as human beings are merely the creation of the mind, which implies conformity, compulsion, brutality, dictatorships, concentration camps—the whole business. When we worship the mind, all that is implied, is it not? If I realize this, if I see the futility of discipline, of control, if I see that the various forms of suppression only strengthen the ‘me’ and the ‘mine’, then what am I to do? Have you ever put yourself that question? I see that to exercise any power over myself is evil, it is merely a continuation of the ‘me’ in a different form, and I also see that the ‘me’ must entirely cease if there is to be peace in the world and in myself. The ‘me’ as a person, as an entity, as psychological process of accumulation, the ‘me’ that is always struggling to become something, the ‘me’ that is assertive, dogmatic, aggressive, the ‘me’ that is kind, loving—that is the centre from which arise all conflicts, all compulsion, all conformity, all desire for success, and it is only in bringing it to an end that there is a possibility of peace within myself and outwardly. When I realize this, what am I to do? How am I to put an end to the ‘me’?

Now, if this is a serious problem to each one of us, what is our response to it? Naturally, we cannot all give our replies, but we can see that any movement of the self in order to become better, nobler, any movement of suppression, any desire for success, must come to an end. That is, the mind, which is the centre of the ‘me’, has to become very quiet, has it not? The mind is the centre of sensation, it is the result of memory, the accumulation of time, and any movement on the part of the mind to become
something is still within the limits of the ‘me’, of sensation. And can the mind, which is sensation, which is memory, which is tradition, which is the calculating machine of the ‘me’, which is everlastingly seeking security, hiding behind words—can that mind, out of its own desire, by any exercise of its own will, come to an end? Can it cease by its own volition?

So I must study my own mind, I must be aware of all its reactions—just be aware of my mind, without any desire to transform it. Is that not the first necessary step?—if I can use that word ‘step’ without introducing the idea of time. To be aware of the process of my mind without condemnation, to observe the fact without judgement, to be merely aware of ‘what is’—is it possible to do that? Some may say ‘yes’, some may say ‘no’—but what others say about this matter is of very little importance, is it not? You have to experiment with this, experience it; and is it possible to experience without building up images, symbols? That is, we generally experience only the things that we recognize, do we not? We are conscious of experiencing only when we recognize the experience, and if we are not capable of recognizing it, there is no experience. So the factor of recognition is essential to what we call experience. Now, is God, Truth, or what you will, a matter of recognition? If I can recognize something, it implies that I have already experienced it before, does it not? That which I have experienced before becomes a memory; and when there is a desire for the continuation of that experience, I project that memory and recognize it, experience it. That is, through memory, through recognition, through experience, I build the centre of the ‘me’.
So, for most of us, it is extremely arduous to go into this problem of change and really bring about a transformation within ourselves. Can I change if I am constantly experiencing through the process of recognition, whether on the verbal level or the psychological level? That is, when I meet you for the first time, I do not know you, but the second time I meet you, I have certain memories of you; there is like or dislike, pain or pleasure. So, through the dictates of pain and pleasure, I say I have met you; there is a process of recognition. That recognition is established verbally or psychologically, and if I am to go beyond and discover a state which is not mere recognition, recollection, memory, must not the centre of the ‘me’, which is the process of recognition, come to an end? There is this entity as the ‘me’ which is everlastingly craving experience, seeking more of what it has known, whether outwardly or psychologically, and as long as the ‘me’ continues to exist, whatever I experience only strengthens the ‘me’, does it not? Therefore I create more and more problems, endless conflict. And is it possible for the mind to be so still that the process of recognition ceases? After all, that is creation, is it not?

Please, in listening to these talks it seems to me that what is important is not to accept all this, but to let the significance of the words penetrate and see whether they have any validity, any truth. It is that quality of truth which liberates, not the verbal denial or assertion, and so it is very important to listen rightly, that is, not to be caught in words, in the logic of certain statements, or in your own experiences. You are here to find out what another says, and to find out you must listen, and to listen rightly is one
of the most difficult things to do, is it not? Because, when I use words like ‘experience’, ‘truth’ and so on, you immediately have certain responses—certain images, symbols come up, and if the mind gets caught in those symbols, you cannot go beyond.

So our problem is how to free the mind of this self-centred activity, not only at the level of social relationships, but also at the psychological level. It is this activity of the self that is causing the mischief, the misery, both in our individual lives and in our life as a group, as a nation, and we can put an end to it only if we understand the whole process of our own thinking. Can thought bring about a vital change? Up to now we have relied on thought, have we not? The political revolution, whether of the right or the extreme left, is the result of thought. And can thought fundamentally change man, change you and me? If you say it can, then you must see all the implications—that man is the product of time, that there is nothing beyond time, and so on and on. So, if I am to create a fundamental change in myself, can I rely on thought as an instrument to bring about that transformation? Or, can there be a fundamental change only when there is the ending of thought? My problem, then, is to experiment, to find out, and I can find out only through self-knowledge, through knowing myself, watching, being aware in moments when I’m off guard. It is only when I begin to understand the process of my own thinking that I can find out whether or not there is a possibility of a fundamental change; until then, mere assertion that I can or cannot change is of little significance. Though we see the importance of a radical change in the world and in ourselves, there is very little chance of such a change as
long as we do not understand the thinker and his thought. The economist and the politician are never revolutionary. It is only the truly religious person that is revolutionary, the man who is seeking Reality, God, or what you will. Those who merely believe, who follow a pattern, who belong to a particular society, sect or group—they are not seekers, therefore they are not real revolutionaries. We can bring about a transformation within ourselves only when we understand the process of our own thinking.

*Question*: What do you mean by ambition? Would you consider any improvement of oneself ambitious? At what point does ambition begin?

*Krishnamurti*: Do we not know when we are ambitious? When I want something more, when I want to assert myself, when I want to become something, is that not ambition? Can we say where it begins and where it ends? Is not all self-improvement a form of ambition? I may not be ambitious in this world, I may not want to be a leader with great political power, or a big businessman with a lot of property, position, but I may be very ambitious spiritually. That is, I want to become a saint, I want to be free from all pride. Is not the very assertion of wanting to be something, the beginning of ambition? The desire not to be ambitious—is that not self-improvement, and therefore self-centred activity? If I am proud and, seeing the implications of pride, I cultivate humility, is not that cultivated humility a self-centred activity? And is that not ambition?

And if you are not to cultivate humility, then what are you going to do with pride? How is one to deal with
it? The very desire to get rid of one thing in order to be something else—is that not a self-centred activity, which is ambition? Please see how extremely difficult it is, when you know what you are, not to struggle to be something else. This process of struggle, this trying to become great, or humble, or generous, is called evolution, is it not? I am this, and I am going through a struggle to be come that. From thesis I proceed to antithesis, and out of that create synthesis. This process is called growth, evolution, is it not? Now, in that is implied self-centred activity, the improving of the self, the ‘me’. But can the ‘me’ ever be improved? It may be improved within its own field, but if I want to go beyond and find out if there is something which is not of the ‘me’, will self-improvement help to bring about that discovery? So, being ambitious, what am I to do? Should I suppress ambition? And is not the very suppression of ambition a form of ambition which negatively strengthens the ‘me’ and in which there is a certain sense of power, dominance?

I see that I am ambitious, and what am I to do? Is it possible to be free from it?—which does not mean that I must become non-ambitious. Is it possible to be free from ambition? I can think it out logically, see the conflicts, the ruthlessness, the brutality of ambition in my relationships, and so on. And will that help me? Will explanations of the perniciousness of ambition help me to be free from ambition? Or, is there only one way, which is to see all the implications of ambition without condemnation, just to be aware of the fact that I am ambitious, not only at the conscious level, but at the deeper levels of my own thinking? Surely, I must be completely aware of it, without any resis-
tance, because the more I struggle against it, the more vitality I give it. Ambition has become a habit with me, and the more I resist a habit, the stronger it becomes. Whereas, if I am aware of it, merely see the fact of it, does that not bring about a radical change? I am no longer concerned with suppressing ambition, or with putting it aside, nor am I satisfied with any explanation—I am directly concerned with the fact of ambition. So, when I look at it, what do I see? Is ambition mere habit? Am I caught in the habit of a society which is based on ambition, on success, on being somebody? Am I stimulated by challenge, by the sense of achievement, and without that stimulation do I feel lost, and so I depend on stimulation? Is it not possible to be aware of all this, to see the implications of it and not react—just see the fact? And will that perception not bring about a radical change? If I acknowledge that I am ambitious and see the implications of it, not only at the verbal level, but also inwardly which means that I am aware of the influence of habit, sensation, tradition, and so on, then what has happened? My mind is quiet with regard to that fact, is it not? My mind does not react to it anymore—it is a fact. And the quiet acceptance of ‘what is’ is a release from that fact, is it not?

Please do not accept this. Experiment with it and you will see. First be aware that you are ambitious, or whatever it is, and then see all your reactions to it, whether those reactions are habitual, traditional, verbal. Merely to oppose the verbal responses by another series of words, will not free you, or if it is tradition, in the mere cultivation of a new tradition or habit you will not find release. The very desire to suppress ambition is a trick of the mind to
be something else—which is part of ambition. So, when the mind sees that any movement it makes with regard to a particular quality is part of the process of its own sustenance and security, what can it do? It cannot do anything; therefore, it is immediately quiet with regard to that quality. It is no longer related to it. But this is an arduous task, is it not?

A revolutionary inward change is essential, and if we are to understand the problem of change, we must go into all this and study the problem of the ‘me’ from different angles.