

Ego-The False Centre

From *Beyond the Frontier of the Mind* by Osho

The first thing to be understood is what ego is. A child is born. A child is born without any knowledge, any consciousness of his own self. And when a child is born the first thing he becomes aware of is not himself; the first thing he becomes aware of is the other. It is natural, because the eyes open outwards, the hands touch others, the ears listen to others, the tongue tastes food and the nose smells the outside. All these senses open outwards.

That is what birth means. Birth means coming into this world, the world of the outside. So when a child is born, he is born into this world. He opens his eyes, sees others. 'Other' means the thou. He becomes aware of the mother first. Then, by and by, he becomes aware of his own body. That too is the other, that too belongs to the world. He is hungry and he feels the body; his need is satisfied, he forgets the body.

This is how a child grows. First he becomes aware of you, thou, other, and then by and by, in contrast to you, thou, he becomes aware of himself.

This awareness is a reflected awareness. He is not aware of who he is. He is simply aware of the mother and what she thinks about him. If she smiles, if she appreciates the child, if she says, "You are beautiful," if she hugs and kisses him, the child feels good about himself. Now an ego is born.

Through appreciation, love, care, he feels he is good, he feels he is valuable, he feels he has some significance.

A center is born.

But this center is a reflected center. It is not his real being. He does not know who he is; he simply knows what others think about him. And this is the ego: the reflection, what others think. If nobody thinks that he is of any use, nobody appreciates him, nobody smiles, then too an ego is born: an ill ego; sad, rejected, like a wound; feeling inferior, worthless. This too is the ego. This too is a reflection.

First the mother - and mother means the world in the beginning. Then others will join the mother, and the world goes on growing. And the more the world grows, the more complex the ego becomes, because many others' opinions are reflected.

The ego is an accumulated phenomenon, a by-product of living with others. If a child lives totally alone, he will never come to grow an ego. But that is not going to help. He will remain like an animal. That doesn't mean that he will come to know the real self, no.

The real can be known only through the false, so the ego is a must. One has to pass through it. It is a discipline. The real can be known only through the illusion. You cannot know the truth directly. First you have to know that which is not true. First you have to encounter the untrue. Through that encounter you become capable of knowing the truth. If you know the false as the false, truth will dawn upon you.

Ego is a need; it is a social need, it is a social by-product. The society means all that is around you - not you, but all that is around you. All, minus you, is the society. And everybody reflects. You will go to school and the teacher will reflect who you are. You will be in friendship with other children and they will reflect who you are. By and by, everybody is adding to your ego, and everybody is trying to modify it in such a way that you don't become a problem to the society.

They are not concerned with you.

They are concerned with the society.

Society is concerned with itself, and that's how it should be.

They are not concerned that you should become a self-knower. They are concerned that you should become an efficient part in the mechanism of the society. You should fit into the pattern. So they are trying to give you an ego that fits with the society. They teach you morality. Morality means giving you an ego which will fit with the society. If you are immoral, you will always be a misfit somewhere or other. That's why we put criminals in the prisons - not that they have done something wrong, not that by putting them in the prisons we are going to improve them, no. They simply don't fit. They are troublemakers. They have certain types of egos of which the society doesn't approve. If the society approves, everything is good.

One man kills somebody - he is a murderer.

And the same man in wartime kills thousands - he becomes a great hero. The society is not bothered by a murder, but the murder should be committed for the society - then it is okay. The society doesn't bother about morality.

Morality means only that you should fit with the society.

If the society is at war, then the morality changes.

If the society is at peace, then there is a different morality.

Morality is a social politics. It is diplomacy. And each child has to be brought up in such a way that he fits into the society, that's all. Because society is interested in efficient members. Society is not interested that you should attain to self-knowledge.

The society creates an ego because the ego can be controlled and manipulated. The self can never be controlled or manipulated. Nobody has ever heard of the society controlling a self - not possible.

And the child needs a center; the child is completely unaware of his own center. The society gives him a center and the child is by and by convinced that this is his center, the ego that society gives.

A child comes back to his home - if he has come first in his class, the whole family is happy. You hug and kiss him, and you take the child on your shoulders and dance and you say, "What a beautiful child! You are a pride to us." You are giving him an ego, a subtle ego. And if the child comes home dejected, unsuccessful, a failure - he couldn't pass, or he has just been on the back bench - then nobody appreciates him and the child feels rejected. He will try harder next time, because the center feels shaken.

Ego is always shaken, always in search of food, that somebody should appreciate it. That's why you continuously ask for attention.

You get the idea of who you are from others.

It is not a direct experience.

It is from others that you get the idea of who you are. They shape your center. This center is false, because you carry your real center. That is nobody's business. Nobody shapes it.

You come with it.

You are born with it.

So you have two centers. One center you come with, which is given by existence itself. That is the self. And the other center, which is created by the society, is the ego. It is a false thing - and it is a very great trick. Through the ego the society is controlling you. You have to behave in a certain way, because only then does the society appreciate you. You have to walk in a certain way; you have to laugh in a certain way; you have to follow certain manners, a morality, a code. Only then will the society appreciate you, and if it doesn't, your ego will be shaken. And when the ego is shaken, you don't know where you are, who you are.

The others have given you the idea.

That idea is the ego.

Try to understand it as deeply as possible, because this has to be thrown. And unless you throw it you will never be able to attain to the self. Because you are addicted to the center, you cannot move, and you cannot look at the self.

And remember, there is going to be an interim period, an interval, when the ego will be shattered, when you will not know who you are, when you will not know where you are going, when all boundaries will melt.

You will simply be confused, a chaos.

Because of this chaos, you are afraid to lose the ego. But it has to be so. One has to pass through the chaos before one attains to the real center.

And if you are daring, the period will be small.

If you are afraid, and you again fall back to the ego, and you again start arranging it, then it can be very, very long; many lives can be wasted.

I have heard: One small child was visiting his grandparents. He was just four years old. In the night when the grandmother was putting him to sleep, he suddenly started crying and weeping and said, "I want to go home. I am afraid of darkness." But the grandmother said, "I know well that at home also you sleep in the dark; I have never seen a light on. So why are you afraid here?" The boy said, "Yes, that's right - but that is MY darkness." This darkness is completely unknown.

Even with darkness you feel, "This is MINE."

Outside - an unknown darkness.

With the ego you feel, "This is MY darkness."

It may be troublesome, maybe it creates many miseries, but still mine. Something to hold to, something to cling to, something underneath the feet; you are not in a vacuum, not in an emptiness. You may be miserable, but at least you ARE. Even being miserable gives you a feeling of 'I am'. Moving from it, fear takes over; you start feeling afraid of the unknown darkness and chaos - because society has managed to clear a small part of your being.

It is just like going to a forest. You make a little clearing, you clear a little ground; you make fencing, you make a small hut; you make a small garden, a lawn, and you are okay. Beyond your fence - the forest, the wild. Here everything is okay; you have planned everything. This is how it has happened.

Society has made a little clearing in your consciousness. It has cleaned just a little part completely, fenced it. Everything is okay there. That's what all your universities are doing. The whole culture and conditioning is just to clear a part so that you can feel at home there.

And then you become afraid.

Beyond the fence there is danger.

Beyond the fence you are, as within the fence you are - and your conscious mind is just one part, one-tenth of your whole being. Nine-tenths is waiting in the darkness. And in that nine-tenths, somewhere your real center is hidden.

One has to be daring, courageous.

One has to take a step into the unknown.

For a while all boundaries will be lost.

For a while you will feel dizzy.

For a while, you will feel very afraid and shaken, as if an earthquake has happened. But if you are courageous and you don't go backwards, if you don't fall back to the ego and you go on and on, there is a hidden center within you that you have been carrying for many lives.

That is your soul, the self.

Once you come near it, everything changes, everything settles again. But now this settling is not done by the society. Now everything becomes a cosmos, not a chaos; a new order arises.

But this is no longer the order of the society - it is the very order of existence itself.

It is what Buddha calls Dhamma, Lao Tzu calls Tao, Heraclitus calls Logos. It is not man-made. It is the VERY order of existence itself. Then everything is suddenly beautiful again, and for the first time really beautiful, because man-made things cannot be beautiful. At the most you can hide the ugliness of them, that's all. You can decorate them, but they can never be beautiful.

The difference is just like the difference between a real flower and a plastic or paper flower. The ego is a plastic flower - dead. It just looks like a flower, it is not a flower. You cannot really call it a flower. Even linguistically to call it a flower is wrong, because a flower is something which flowers. And this plastic thing is just a thing, not a flowering. It is dead. There is no life in it.

You have a flowering center within. That's why Hindus call it a lotus - it is a flowering. They call it the one-thousand-petaled-lotus. One thousand means infinite petals. And it goes on flowering, it never stops, it never dies.

But you are satisfied with a plastic ego.

There are some reasons why you are satisfied. With a dead thing, there are many conveniences. One is that a dead thing never dies. It cannot - it was never alive. So you can have plastic flowers, they are good in a way. They are permanent; they are not eternal, but they are permanent.

The real flower outside in the garden is eternal, but not permanent. And the eternal has its own way of being eternal. The way of the eternal is to be born again and again and to die. Through death it refreshes itself, rejuvenates itself.

To us it appears that the flower has died - it never dies.

It simply changes bodies, so it is ever fresh.

It leaves the old body, it enters a new body. It flowers somewhere else; it goes on flowering.

But we cannot see the continuity because the continuity is invisible. We see only one flower, another flower; we never see the continuity.

It is the same flower which flowered yesterday.

It is the same sun, but in a different garb.

The ego has a certain quality - it is dead. It is a plastic thing. And it is very easy to get it, because others give it. You need not seek it, there is no search involved. That's why unless you become a seeker after the unknown, you have not yet become an individual. You are just a part of the crowd. You are just a mob.

When you don't have a real center, how can you be an individual?

The ego is not individual. Ego is a social phenomenon - it is society, it's not you. But it gives you a function in the society, a hierarchy in the society. And if you remain satisfied with it, you will miss the whole opportunity of finding the self.

And that's why you are so miserable.

With a plastic life, how can you be happy?

With a false life, how can you be ecstatic and blissful? And then this ego creates many miseries, millions of them.

You cannot see, because it is your own darkness. You are attuned to it.

Have you ever noticed that all types of miseries enter through the ego? It cannot make you blissful; it can only make you miserable.

Ego is hell.

Whenever you suffer, just try to watch and analyze, and you will find, somewhere the ego is the cause of it. And the ego goes on finding causes to suffer.

You are an egoist, as everyone is. Some are very gross, just on the surface, and they are not so difficult. Some are very subtle, deep down, and they are the real problems.

This ego comes continuously in conflict with others because every ego is so unconfident about itself. It has to be - it is a false thing. When you don't have anything in your hand and you just think that something is there, then there will be a problem.

If somebody says, "There is nothing," immediately the fight will start, because you also feel that there is nothing. The other makes you aware of the fact.

Ego is false, it is nothing.

That you also know.

How can you miss knowing it? It is impossible! A conscious being - how can he miss knowing that this ego is just false? And then others say that there is nothing - and whenever the others say that there is nothing they hit a wound, they say a truth - and nothing hits like the truth.

You have to defend, because if you don't defend, if you don't become defensive, then where will you be?

You will be lost.

The identity will be broken.

So you have to defend and fight - that is the clash.

A man who attains to the self is never in any clash. Others may come and clash with him, but he is never in clash with anybody.

It happened that one Zen master was passing through a street. A man came running and hit him hard. The master fell down. Then he got up and started to walk in the same direction in which he was going before, not even looking back.

A disciple was with the master. He was simply shocked. He said, "Who is this man? What is this? If one lives in such a way, then anybody can come and kill you. And you have not even looked at that person, who he is, and why he did it."

The master said, "That is his problem, not mine."

You can clash with an enlightened man, but that is your problem, not his. And if you are hurt in that clash, that too is your own problem. He cannot hurt you. And it is like knocking against a wall - you will be hurt, but the wall has not hurt you.

The ego is always looking for some trouble. Why? Because if nobody pays attention to you, the ego feels hungry.

It lives on attention.

So even if somebody is fighting and angry with you, that too is good because at least the attention is paid. If somebody loves, it is okay. If somebody is not loving you, then even anger will be good. At least the attention will come to you. But if nobody is paying any attention to you, nobody thinks that you are somebody important, significant, then how will you feed your ego?

Other's attention is needed.

In millions of ways you attract the attention of others; you dress in a certain way, you try to look beautiful, you behave, you become very polite, you change. When you feel what type of situation is there, you immediately change so that people pay attention to you.

This is a deep begging.

A real beggar is one who asks for and demands attention. And a real emperor is one who lives in himself; he has a center of his own, he doesn't depend on anybody else.

Buddha sitting under his bodhi tree...if the whole world suddenly disappears, will it make any difference to Buddha? - none. It will not make any difference at all. If the whole world disappears, it will not make any difference because he has attained to the center.

But you, if the wife escapes, divorces you, goes to somebody else, you are completely shattered - because she had been paying attention to you, caring, loving, moving around you, helping you to feel that you were somebody. Your whole empire is lost, you are simply shattered. You start thinking about suicide. Why? Why, if a wife leaves you, should you commit suicide? Why, if a husband leaves you, should you commit suicide? Because you don't have any center of your own. The wife was giving you the center; the husband was giving you the center.

This is how people exist. This is how people become dependent on others. It is a deep slavery. Ego HAS to be a slave. It depends on others. And only a person who has no ego is for the first time a master; he is no longer a slave. Try to understand this.

And start looking for the ego - not in others, that is not your business, but in yourself. Whenever you feel miserable, immediately close your eyes and try to find out from where the misery is coming and you will always find it is the false center which has clashed with someone.

You expected something, and it didn't happen.

You expected something, and just the contrary happened - your ego is shaken, you are in misery. Just look, whenever you are miserable, try to find out why.

Causes are not outside you. The basic cause is within you - but you always look outside, you always ask:

Who is making me miserable?

Who is the cause of my anger?

Who is the cause of my anguish?

And if you look outside you will miss.

Just close the eyes and always look within.

The source of all misery, anger, anguish, is hidden in you, your ego.

And if you find the source, it will be easy to move beyond it. If you can see that it is your own ego that gives you trouble, you will prefer to drop it - because nobody can carry the source of misery if he understands it.

And remember, there is no need to drop the ego.

You cannot drop it.

If you try to drop it, you will attain to a certain subtle ego again which says, "I have become humble."

Don't try to be humble. That's again ego in hiding - but it's not dead.

Don't try to be humble.

Nobody can try humility, and nobody can create humility through any effort of his own - no. When the ego is no more, a humbleness comes to you. It is not a creation. It is a shadow of the real center.

And a really humble man is neither humble nor egoistic.

He is simply simple.

He's not even aware that he is humble.

If you are aware that you are humble, the ego is there.

Look at humble persons.... There are millions who think that they are very humble. They bow down very low, but watch them - they are the subtlest egoists. Now humility is their source of food. They say, "I am humble," and then they look at you and they wait for you to appreciate them.

"You are really humble," they would like you to say. "In fact, you are the most humble man in the world; nobody is as humble as you are." Then see the smile that comes on their faces.

What is ego? Ego is a hierarchy that says, "No one is like me." It can feed on humbleness - "Nobody is like me, I am the most humble man."

It happened once:

A fakir, a beggar, was praying in a mosque, just early in the morning when it was still dark. It was a certain religious day for Mohammedians, and he was praying, and he was saying, "I am nobody. I am the poorest of the poor, the greatest sinner of sinners."

Suddenly there was one more person who was praying. He was the emperor of that country, and he was not aware that there was somebody else there who was praying - it was dark, and the emperor was also saying:

"I am nobody. I am nothing. I am just empty, a beggar at our door." When he heard that somebody else was saying the same thing, he said, "Stop! Who is trying to overtake me? Who are you? How dare you say before the emperor that you are nobody when he is saying that he is nobody?"

This is how the ego goes. It is so subtle. Its ways are so subtle and cunning; you have to be very, very alert, only then will you see it. Don't try to be humble. Just try to see that all misery, all anguish comes through it.

Just watch! No need to drop it.

You cannot drop it. Who will drop it? Then the DROPPER will become the ego. It always comes back.

Whatever you do, stand out of it, and look and watch.

Whatever you do - humbleness, humility, simplicity - nothing will help. Only one thing is possible, and that is just to watch and see that it is the source of all misery. Don't say it. Don't repeat it - WATCH. Because if I say it is the source of all misery and you repeat it, then it is useless. YOU have to come to that understanding. Whenever you are miserable, just close the eyes and don't try to find some cause outside. Try to see from where this misery is coming.

It is your own ego.

If you continuously feel and understand, and the understanding that the ego is the cause becomes so deep-rooted, one day you will suddenly see that it has disappeared. Nobody drops it - nobody can drop it. You simply see; it has simply disappeared, because the very understanding that ego causes all misery becomes the dropping. **THE VERY UNDERSTANDING IS THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE EGO.**

And you are so clever in seeing the ego in others. Anybody can see someone else's ego. When it comes to your own, then the problem arises - because you don't know the territory, you have never traveled on it.

The whole path towards the divine, the ultimate, has to pass through this territory of the ego. The false has to be understood as false. The source of misery has to be understood as the source of misery - then it simply drops.

When you know it is poison, it drops. When you know it is fire, it drops. When you know this is the hell, it drops.

And then you never say, "I have dropped the ego." Then you simply laugh at the whole thing, the joke that you were the creator of all misery.

I was just looking at a few cartoons of Charlie Brown. In one cartoon he is playing with blocks, making a house out of children's blocks. He is sitting in the middle of the blocks building the walls. Then a moment comes when he is enclosed; all around he has made a wall. Then he cries, "Help, help!"

He has done the whole thing! Now he is enclosed, imprisoned. This is childish, but this is all that you have done also. You have made a house all around yourself, and now you are crying, "Help, help!" And the misery becomes a millionfold - because there are helpers who are also in the same boat.

It happened that one very beautiful woman went to see her psychiatrist for the first time. The psychiatrist said, "Come closer please." When she came closer, he simply jumped and hugged and kissed the woman. She was shocked. Then he said, "Now sit down. This takes care of my problem, now what is your problem?"

The problem becomes multifold, because there are helpers who are in the same boat. And they would like to help, because when you help somebody the ego feels very good, very, very good - because you are a great helper, a great guru, a master; you are helping so many people. The greater the crowd of your followers, the better you feel.

But you are in the same boat - you cannot help.

Rather, you will harm.

People who still have their own problems cannot be of much help. Only someone who has no problems of his own can help you. Only then is there the clarity to see, to see through you. A mind that has no problems of its own can see you, you become transparent.

A mind that has no problems of its own can see through itself; that's why it becomes capable of seeing through others.

In the West, there are many schools of psychoanalysis, many schools, and no help is reaching people, but rather, harm. Because the people who are helping others, or trying to help, or posing as helpers, are in the same boat.

...It is difficult to see one's own ego.

It is very easy to see other's egos. But that is not the point, you cannot help them.

Try to see your own ego.

Just watch it.

Don't be in a hurry to drop it, just watch it. The more you watch, the more capable you will become. Suddenly one day, you simply see that it has dropped. And when it drops by itself, only then does it drop. There is no other way. Prematurely you cannot drop it.

It drops just like a dead leaf.

The tree is not doing anything - just a breeze, a situation, and the dead leaf simply drops. The tree is not even aware that the dead leaf has dropped. It makes no noise, it makes no claim - nothing.

The dead leaf simply drops and shatters on the ground, just like that.

When you are mature through understanding, awareness, and you have felt totally that ego is the cause of all your misery, simply one day you see the dead leaf dropping.

It settles into the ground, dies of its own accord. You have not done anything so you cannot claim that you have dropped it. You see that it has simply disappeared, and then the real center arises.

And that real center is the soul, the self, the god, the truth, or whatsoever you want to call it.

It is nameless, so all names are good.

You can give it any name of your own liking.

Reflections on the Self: J. Krishnamurti

Though this is not a small group, we will try to have a free and serious discussion instead of turning these gatherings into question and answer meetings. Some, no doubt, would prefer uninterrupted talks, but it seems to me to be more advantageous for all of us to join in a purposeful discussion which requires earnestness and sustained interest.

For what are we striving? What is it that each one is seeking? Until we are aware of our separate pursuits, it is not possible to establish right relationship between us. One might be seeking fulfillment and success, another wealth and power, another fame and popularity; some may wish to accumulate and some to renounce; there might be some who are earnestly seeking to dissolve the **ego**, while others may wish merely to talk about it. Is it not important for us to find out what it is we are seeking? To extricate ourselves from the confusion and misery in and about us, we must be aware of our instinctive and cultivated desires and tendencies. We think and feel in terms of achievement, of gain and loss, and so there is constant strife; but there is a way of living, a state of being, in which conflict and sorrow have no place. So to make these

discussions fruitful it is necessary, is it not, first to understand our own intentions. When we observe what is taking place in our lives and in the world, we perceive that most of us, in subtle or crude ways, are occupied with the expansion of the self. We crave self-expansion now or in the future; for us life is a process of the continuous expansion of the **ego** through power, wealth, asceticism, or the cultivation of virtue and so on. Not only for the individual but for the group, for the nation, this process signifies fulfilling, becoming, growing, and has ever led to great disasters and miseries. We are ever striving within the framework of the self, however much it may be enlarged and glorified. If this be your aim, and mine wholly different, then we will have no relationship, though we may meet; then our discussions will be purposeless and confused. So first we must be very clear in our intention. We must be clear and definite as to what we are seeking. Are we craving self-expansion, the constant nourishment of the **ego**, the 'me' and the 'mine', or are we seeking to understand and so transcend the process of the self? Will self-expansion bring about understanding, enlightenment; or is there illumination, liberation, only when the process of self-expansion has ceased? Can we reveal ourselves sufficiently to discern in which direction our interest lies? You must have come here with serious intent; therefore, we will discuss in order to clarify that intent, and consider if our daily life indicates what our pursuits are and whether we are nourishing the **ego** or not. So these discussions can be a means of self-exposure to each one of us. In this self-exposure we will discover the true significance of life.

Must we not first have freedom to discover? There can be no freedom if our action is ever enclosing. Is not the action of the **ego**, the sense of the 'me' and the 'mine', ever a process of limitation? We are trying to find out, are we not, if the process of self-expansion leads to reality or if reality comes into being only when the self ceases.

Questioner: Must one not go through the self-expansive process in order to realize the immeasurable?

Krishnamurti: May I put the same question differently? Must one go through drunkenness to know sobriety? Must one go through the various states of craving only to renounce them?

Questioner: Can one do anything with regard to this self-expansive process?

Krishnamurti: May I elaborate this question? We are, are we not, positively encouraging through many actions the expansion of the **ego**. Our tradition, our education, our social conditioning sustain positively the activities of the **ego**. This positive activity may take a negative form - not to be something. So our action is still a positive or negative activity of the self. Through centuries of tradition and education, thought accepts as natural and inevitable the self-expansive life, positively or negatively. How can thought free itself from this conditioning? How can it be tranquil, silent? If there is that stillness, that is, if it is not caught in self-expansive processes, then there is reality.

Questioner: If I rightly understand, surely you are reaching way out into the abstract, are you not? You are speaking about reincarnation, I presume?

Krishnamurti: I am not, sir, nor am I reaching out into the abstract. Our social and religious structure is based on the urge to become something, positively or negatively. Such a process is the very nourishment of the **ego** through name, family, achievement, through identification of the 'me' and 'mine', which is ever causing conflict and sorrow. We perceive the results of this way of life - strife, confusion, and antagonism - ever spreading, ever engulfing. How is one to transcend strife and sorrow? This is what we are attempting to understand during these discussions.

Is not craving the very root of the self? How is thought, which has become the means of self-expansion, to act without giving sustenance to the **ego**, the cause of conflict and sorrow? Is this not an important question? Do not let me make it important to you. Is this not a vital question to each one? If it is, must we not find the true answer? We are nourishing the **ego** in many ways, and before we condemn or encourage, we must understand its significance, must we not? We use religion and philosophy as a means of self-expansion; our social structure is based on the aggrandizement of the self: the clerk will become the manager and later the owner, the pupil will become the Master and so on. In this process there is ever conflict, antagonism, sorrow. Is this an intelligent and inevitable process? We can discover truth for ourselves only when we do not depend on another; no specialist can give us the right answer. Each one has to find the right answer directly for himself. For this reason it is important to be earnest.

We vary in our earnestness according to circumstances, our moods and fancies. Earnestness must be independent of circumstances and moods, of persuasion and hope. We often think that perhaps through shock we shall be made earnest, but dependence is never productive of earnestness. Earnestness comes into being with inquiring awareness, and are we so alertly aware? If you are aware you will realize that your mind is constantly engaged in the activities of the **ego** and its identification; if you pursue this activity further, you will find the deep-seated self-interest. These thoughts of self-interest arise from the needs of daily life, things you do from moment to moment, your role in society and so on, all of which build up the structure of the **ego**. This seems so strangely inevitable, but before we accept this inevitability, must we not be aware of our purposive intention, whether we desire to nourish the **ego** or not? For according to our hidden intentions we will act. We know how the self is built up and strengthened through the pleasure and pain principle, through memory, through identification, and so on. This process is the cause of conflict and sorrow. Do we earnestly seek to put an end to the cause of sorrow?

Questioner: How do we know our intention is right before we understand the truth of the matter? If we do not first comprehend truth, then we shall go off the beam, founding communities, forming groups, having half-baked ideas. Is it not necessary, as you have suggested, to know oneself first? I have tried to write down my thoughts-feelings as has been suggested, but I find myself blocked and unable to follow my thoughts right through.

Krishnamurti: Through being choicelessly aware of your intentions, the truth of the matter is known. We are often blocked because, unconsciously, we are afraid to take action which might lead to further trouble and suffering. But no clear and definite action can take place if we have not uncovered our deep and hidden intention with regard to nourishing and maintaining the self.

Is not this fear which hinders understanding the result of projection, speculation? You imagine that freedom from self-expansion is a state of nothingness, an emptiness, and this creates fear, thus preventing any actual experience. Through speculation, through imagination, you prevent the discovery of what is. As the self is in constant flux, we seek, through identification, permanency. Identification brings about the illusion of permanency, and it is the loss of this which causes fear. We recognize that the self is in constant flux, yet we cling to something which we call the permanent in the self, an enduring self which we fabricate out of the impermanent self. If we deeply experienced and understood that the self is ever impermanent, then there would be no identification with any particular form of craving, with any particular country, nation, or with any organized system of thought or religion, for with identification comes the horror of war, the ruthlessness of so-called civilization.

Questioner: Is the fact of this constant flux not enough to make us identify? It seems to me that we cling to something called the 'me', the self, for it is a pleasant habit of sound. We know a river even when it is dry; similarly, we cling to something that is 'me' even though we know its impermanency. The 'me' is shallow or deep, in full flood or dry, but it is always the 'me' to be encouraged, nourished, maintained at any cost. Why must the 'I' process be eliminated?

Krishnamurti: Now why do you ask this question? If the process is pleasurable you will continue in it and not ask such a question; when it is disagreeable, painful, then only will you desire to put an end to it. According to pleasure and pain, thought is shaped, controlled, guided, and upon such a weak, changing foundation we make an attempt to understand truth! Whether the self should be maintained or not is a very vital issue, for on it depends the whole course of our action, and so how we approach this problem is all-important. On our approach depends the answer. If we are not earnest, then the answer will be according to our prejudices and passing fancies. So the approach matters more than the problem itself. Upon the seeker depends what he finds; if he is prejudiced, limited, then he will find according to his conditioning. What, then, is important is for the seeker first to understand himself.

Questioner: How do we know if there is an abstract truth?

Krishnamurti: Surely, sir, we are not considering now an abstract truth; we are attempting to discover the true and lasting answer to our problem of sorrow, for on that depends the whole course of life.

Questioner: Can the conditioned mind observe its conditioning?

Krishnamurti: Is it not possible to be aware of our prejudices? Cannot we know when we are dishonest, when we are intolerant, when we are greedy?

Questioner: Is not the nourishment of the body equally wrong?

Krishnamurti: We are considering the psychological nourishment, the expansion of the self, which causes such strife and misery. One can accept the activity of the self as inevitable and follow that course, or there may be another way of life. If it is an intense problem to each one of us, then we shall find the right answer.

Questioner: Shall we not know the true answer when the desire for it is greater than for any other thing?

Questioner: Is the **ego** always harmful? Is selfishness ever beneficial?

Krishnamurti: Self-centered attention and activity, positively or negatively, is the cause of strife and pain. How seriously is each one considering this problem? How earnest are we about discovering the truth of the nature and activity of the **ego**, the self? Our meditation and spiritual discipline have no meaning if first we are not clear upon this point. True meditation is not self-expansion in any form. So until we can have a common understanding of our purpose, there will be confusion, and right relationship between us will not be possible.

Questioner: Is there not a way straight to the problem, to find out the truth?

Krishnamurti: There is, but this demands utter stillness, open receptivity. This requires right understanding; otherwise, effort to be open, to be tranquil becomes another means of self-expansion. I am saying that there is a different way of life - a way that is not of self-expansion, in which there is ecstasy - but it has no validity if you merely accept my statement; such acceptance will become another form of egotistic activity. You must know for yourself, directly, the truth of yourself, and

you cannot realize it through another, however great. There is no authority that can reveal it. Truth can be uncovered only through self-knowledge. We have a common problem to which we are trying to find the right answer.

Questioner: Writing a book could be a self-expansive action, could it not?

Questioner: Should we not establish a purpose in our lives?

Krishnamurti: The **ego** can choose a noble purpose and so utilize it as a means for its own expansion.

Questioner: If there is no self-expansion is there a purpose, as we know it now?

Krishnamurti: A man who is asleep dreams that he has a purpose or must choose a purpose, but does he who is awake have a purpose? He is simply awake. Our frames of reference, our purposes are a means, negatively or positively, of measuring the growth of the self.

Questioner: Is fulfillment self-expansion?

Krishnamurti: If fulfillment is prevented is there not the pain of frustration of the self? Questions of similar kind will find their answer in discovering the truth concerning the self-expansive process; this depends on earnestness and on the open receptivity of the mind-heart.

Questioner: Must we not know what is the other way of life before we can relinquish self-aggrandizement?

Krishnamurti: How can we know or be aware of another way of life until we can perceive the falseness, the futility of acquisition and self-expansion? In understanding the ways of self-aggrandizement, we shall become aware. To speculate about the way becomes a hindrance to the very understanding of that life which is not one of self-perpetuation. So must we not discover the truth concerning the habitual activities of the self? It is knowledge of the hindrance that is the liberating factor, not the attempt to be free from the hindrance. Effort made to be free without the liberating action of truth is still within the enclosing walls of the self. You can discover truth only if you are willing to give your whole mind and heart to it, not a few moments of your easily spared time. If we are earnest we will find truth; but this earnestness cannot depend on stimulation of any kind. We must give our full and deep attention to the discovery of the truth of our problem, not for a few grudging moments but constantly. It is truth alone that liberates thought from its own enclosing process.

Freedom from Conditioning: J.Krishnamurti

HE WAS VERY concerned with helping humanity, with doing good works, and was active in various social-welfare organizations. He said he had literally never taken a long holiday, and that since his graduation from college he had worked constantly for the betterment of man. Of course he wasn't taking any money for the work he was doing.

His work had always been very important to him, and he was greatly attached to what he did. He had become a first-class social worker, and he loved it. But he had heard something in one of the talks about the various kinds of escape which condition the mind, and he wanted to talk things over.

“Do you think being a social worker is conditioning? Does it only bring about further conflict?”

Let us find out what we mean by conditioning. When are we aware that we are conditioned? Are we ever aware of it? Are you aware that you are conditioned, or are you only aware of conflict, of struggle at various levels of your being? Surely, we are aware, not of our conditioning, but only of conflict, of pain and pleasure.

“What do you mean by conflict?”

Every kind of conflict: the conflict between nations, between various social groups, between individuals, and the conflict within oneself. Is not conflict inevitable as long as there is no integration between the actor and his action, between challenge and response? Conflict is our problem, is it not? Not any one particular conflict, but all conflict: the struggle between ideas, beliefs, ideologies, between the opposites. If there were no conflict there would be no problems.

“Are you suggesting that we should all seek a life of isolation, of contemplation?”

Contemplation is arduous, it is one of the most difficult things to understand. Isolation, though each one is consciously or unconsciously seeking it in his own way, does not solve our problems; on the contrary, it increases them. We are trying to understand what are the factors of conditioning which bring further conflict. We are only aware of conflict, of pain and pleasure, and we are not aware of our conditioning. What makes for conditioning?

“Social or environmental influences: the society in which we were born, the culture in which we have been raised, economic and political pressures, and so on.”

That is so; but is that all? These influences are our own product, are they not? Society is the outcome of man's relationship with man, which is fairly obvious. This relationship is one of use, of need, of comfort, of gratification, and it creates influences, values that bind us. The binding is our conditioning. By our own thoughts and actions we are bound; but we are

not aware that we are bound, we are only aware of the conflict of pleasure and pain. We never seem to go beyond this; and if we do, it is only into further conflict. We are not aware of our conditioning, and until we are, we can only produce further conflict and confusion.

“How is one to be aware of one’s conditioning?”

It is possible only by understanding another process, the process of attachment. If we can understand why we are attached, then perhaps we can be aware of our conditioning.

“Isn’t that rather a long way round to come to a direct question?”

Is it? just try to be aware of your conditioning. You can only know it indirectly, in relation to something else. You cannot be aware of your conditioning as an abstraction, for then it is merely verbal, without much significance. We are only aware of conflict. Conflict exists when there is no integration between challenge and response. This conflict is the result of our conditioning.

Conditioning is attachment: attachment to work, to tradition, to property, to people, to ideas, and so on. If there were no attachment, would there be conditioning? Of course not. So why are we attached? I am attached to my country because through identification with it I become somebody. I identify myself with my work, and the work becomes important. I am my family, my property; I am attached to them.

The object of attachment offers me the means of escape from my own emptiness. Attachment is escape, and it is escape that strengthens conditioning. If I am attached to you, it is because you have become the means of escape from myself; therefore you are very important to me and I must possess you, hold on to you. You become the conditioning factor, and escape is the conditioning. If we can be aware of our escapes, we can then perceive the factors, the influences that make for conditioning.

“Am I escaping from myself through social work?”

Are you attached to it, bound to it? Would you feel lost, empty, bored, if you did not do social work?

“I am sure I would.”

Attachment to your work is your escape. There are escapes at all the levels of our being. You escape through work, another through drink, another through religious ceremonies, another through knowledge, another through God, and still another is addicted to amusement. All escapes are the same, there is no superior or inferior escape. God and drink are on the same level as long as they are escapes from what we are. When we are aware of our escapes, only then can we know of our conditioning.

“What shall I do if I cease to escape through social work? Can I do anything without escaping? Is not all my action a form of escape from what I am?”

Is this question merely verbal, or does it reflect an actuality, a fact which you are experiencing? If you did not escape, what would happen? Have you ever tried it?

“What you are saying is so negative, if I may say so. You don’t offer any substitute for work.”

Is not all substitution another form of escape? When one particular form of activity is not satisfactory or brings further conflict, we turn to another. To replace one activity by another without understanding escape is rather futile, is it not? It is these escapes and our attachment to them that make for conditioning. Conditioning brings problems, conflict. It is conditioning that prevents our understanding of the challenge; being conditioned, our response must inevitably create conflict.

“How can one be free from conditioning?”

Only by understanding, being aware of our escapes. Our attachment to a person, to work, to an ideology, is the conditioning factor; this is the thing we have to understand, and not seek a better or more intelligent escape. All escapes are unintelligent, as they inevitably bring about conflict. To cultivate detachment is another form of escape, of isolation; it is attachment to an abstraction, to an ideal called detachment. The ideal is fictitious, ego-made, and becoming the ideal is an escape from what is.

There is the understanding of what is, an adequate action towards what is, only when the mind is no longer seeking any escape. The very thinking about what is is an escape from what is. Thinking about the problem is escape from the problem; for thinking is the problem, and the only problem. The mind, unwilling to be what it is, fearful of what it is, seeks these various escapes; and the way of escape is thought. As long as there is thinking, there must be escapes, attachments, which only strengthen conditioning.

Freedom from conditioning comes with the freedom from thinking. When the mind is utterly still, only then is there freedom for the real to be.

To examine, there must be freedom from views

Jiddu Krishnamurti – What is necessary is to examine unemotionally, not merely intellectually. Because the intellect doesn't solve any problem; it can only invent a lot of ideas, theories. Nor can emotion dissipate the urgency of the problems that one has to face and resolve.

What is necessary, it seems to me, is a mind that is capable of examination. To examine, there must be freedom from personal views, with a mind that is not guided by one's own temperament, inclination, nor is compelled by circumstances. And that's quite a difficult task because we are accustomed to examine everything from a personal point of view: of like or dislike, to certain commitments, to certain philosophies, to certain formulas.

And therefore we're always translating these problems according to our particular limitation; but, if we would translate or understand these problems deeply and fully, it seems to me that one must look at them, not as an individual, but as a human being.

I think there is a vast difference between the two. The individual is the local entity, the American, the man who lives on the West Coast or the East Coast, or in the Midwest. The individual is the Indian, far away, with his outlook, with his limitations, with his superstitions, with his innumerable religions and doctrines and beliefs. The individual is caught in his nationalities, by the division of the sectarian spirit, whether it be Catholic or Protestant, or the various nationalistic divisions with their Democratic, Republican political parties, and so on and on and on. In that frame the individual exists.

But I think the human being supersedes the individual. Whether they live in Russia, China, India, America, or in any other part of the world, human beings have the same common factor of sorrow, of joy, of unresolved miseries, despairs, the immense loneliness of modern existence, the utter meaninglessness of life as it is lived now throughout the world – the wars, the continuation of hatred, the national divisions, the utter despair of life. At that level is the human being, though the individual does partake of all that; but if we merely consider the individual, we shall not inquire much, very deeply. It is like cultivating one's own little backyard, and to cultivate that little backyard is necessary. But that little land is in relation to the whole of the earth upon which man lives as a human being, in travail, in despair, in agony – this endless sorrow, this fleeting love, and the ending of life.

So, if we could consider these problems as human beings, not as an American unrelated to the rest of the world, unrelated to the vast hungry East, but rather as a human being with all the innumerable problems, then perhaps we can intelligently, with care, resolve our problems.

Jiddu Krishnamurti : When are you aware of this Conditioning

Questioner: We are conditioned how to look at the sunset, we are conditioned how we listen to you as the speaker. So through our conditioning we look at everything and listen to everything. How is one to be free of this conditioning?

Jiddu Krishnamurti: When are you aware of this conditioning, of any conditioning? Do please follow it a little bit. When are you aware that you are conditioned? Are you aware that you are conditioned as an American, as a Hindu, as a Catholic, Protestant, Communist, this and that? Are you aware that you are so conditioned, or are you aware of it because somebody has told you?

If you are aware because someone has pointed out to you that you are conditioned, then that is one kind of awareness. But if you are aware that you are conditioned without being told, then it has a different quality. If you are told that you are hungry, that is one thing; but if you are actually hungry that is another.

Now find out which it is: whether you were told you are conditioned and therefore you realize it; or because you are aware because you are involved in this whole, process of living and because of that awareness you realize for yourself, without being told, that you are conditioned. Then that has a vitality, then it becomes a problem that you have to understand very deeply. One sees that one is conditioned, not because one is told. The obvious reaction to it is to throw away that conditioning, if you are intelligent.

Becoming aware of a particular conditioning, you revolt against it, as the present generation is revolting – which is merely a reaction. Revolt against a conditioning forms another kind of conditioning. One becomes aware of one's conditioning as a Communist, a Protestant, a Democrat, or a Republican. What takes place when there is no reaction but only awareness of what this conditioning actually is? What takes place when you are choicelessly aware of this conditioning, which you have found for yourself? There is no reaction.

Then you are learning about this conditioning, why it comes into being. Two thousand years of propaganda have made you believe in a particular form of religious dogma. You are aware of how the church through centuries upon centuries, through tradition, repetition, through various rituals and entertainments, has conditioned our minds. There has been the repetition day after day, month after month, from childhood on; we are baptized and all the rest of it. And another form of the same thing takes place in other countries like India, China and so on.

Now when you become aware of it, what happens? You see how quickly the mind is influenced. The mind being pliable, young, innocent, is conditioned as a Communist, Catholic, Protestant and so on. Why is it conditioned? Why is it so shaped by propaganda? Are you following this? Why are you persuaded by propaganda to buy certain things, to believe in certain things, why? Not only is there this constant pressure from the outside, but also one wants to belong to something, one wants to belong to a group, because belonging to a group is safe.

One wants to be a tribal entity. And behind that there is fear, fear of being alone, of being left out – left out not only psychologically, but also one may not get a job. All that is involved in it and then you ask whether the mind can be free of conditioning. When you see the danger of conditioning, as you see the danger of a precipice or of a wild animal, then it drops away from you without any effort. But we don't see the danger of being conditioned. We don't see the danger of nationalism, how it separates man from man. If you saw the danger of it intensely, vitally, then you would drop it instantly.

So the question then is: Is it possible to be so intensely aware of conditioning that you see the truth of it? – not whether you like or dislike it, but the fact that you are conditioned and therefore have a mind incapable of freedom. Because only the free mind knows what love is.

Discipline vs Conditioning

Question - Beloved Master, Would you please explain the difference between Conditioning and Discipline?

Osho - Prem Dharmendra, there is a great difference. They are totally different dimensions, and not only different but diametrically opposite too. Conditioning is something forced from the outside upon you against your will, against your consciousness. It is to destroy you, it is to manipulate you. It is to create a pseudo personality so that your essential man is lost.

The society is very much afraid of your reality. The church is afraid, the state is afraid, everybody is afraid of your essential person, your essential being, because the essential being is rebellious, intelligent. It cannot be easily reduced to slavery. It cannot be exploited. Nobody can use your essential being as a means; your essential being is an end unto itself.

Hence the whole society tries in every possible way to disconnect you from your essential core, and it creates a false, plastic personality around you and it forces you to become identified with it. That's what it calls education. It is not education; it is mis-education. It is destructive, it is violent.

This whole society, up to now, has been very violent with the individual. It does not believe in the individual; it is against the individual. It tries in every possible way to destroy you for its own purposes. It needs clerks, it needs stationmasters, deputy-collectors, policemen, magistrates, it needs soldiers. It does not need human beings. We have failed, up to now, in creating a society which needs human beings, simple human beings.

The society is interested that you should be more skillful, more productive, and less creative. It wants you to function like a machine, efficiently, but it does not want you to become awakened. It does not want buddhas and christs -- Socrates, Pythagoras, Lao Tzu. No, these people are not needed at all by the society. If sometimes they happen, they don't happen because of the society; they happen in spite of the society.

It is a miracle how a few people have been able sometimes to escape from this great prison. The prison is so great, it is so difficult to escape out of it. And even in escaping from one prison you will enter into another because the whole earth has become a prison. You can become a Mohammedan from a Hindu or you can become a Christian from a Mohammedan or you can become a Hindu from a Christian, but you are simply changing your prison. You can become a German from being an Indian or you can become a Chinese from being an Italian, but you are simply changing prisons -- political, religious, social prisons. Maybe for a few days the new prison would look like freedom -- only because of its newness; otherwise it is not freedom.

Free society is still an idea that has to be materialized. This whole slavery of man depends on conditioning. And conditioning starts even when you are in your mother's womb. Now they have found ways to condition the child in the mother's womb. In Russia they have developed certain kinds of belts which the pregnant woman can wear. Those belts press certain points in the growing child's brain and that pressure will create a robot. He will be born like a machine. He will be always obedient, faithful to the state, faithful to communism, faithful to the communist holy trinity -- or unholy trinity -- Marx, Engels, Lenin. He will believe in DAS KAPITAL, just as others believe in the Bible. Nobody reads the Bible, nobody reads DAS KAPITAL.

I have met many communists; I have not seen a single communist who has read DAS KAPITAL from the beginning to the end. Everybody has a copy. Russian books are so cheap and they look so good, they are bound so beautifully, that you can decorate your drawing room with Russian books. But nobody reads them, just like no Hindu reads the Vedas. There is nothing much to read either.

But conditioning starts from the mother's womb or, at the most, the moment you are born. You are circumcised and you become a Jew. You are baptized and you become a Christian, and so on, so forth. You are taken to the church and to the temple and to the mosque, and you are being brought up in a certain atmosphere where you will find all are Mohammedans or all are Christians or all are Hindus. And naturally the child is bound to follow the people who are around him.

By the time he is twenty-five and comes back from the university he is utterly conditioned, and so deeply conditioned that he will not be even aware of the conditioning. Everything has been fed into his biocomputer. And the society punishes those who are reluctant, resistant to these conditionings. It rewards those, with gold medals, prizes, even Nobel Prizes; it rewards those who are very willing to be slaves, who are willing to serve the vested interests.

Holston was hired as a ranch hand in Texas. One day he approached Davis, the foreman. "What do you do for fun here on the prairie?"

"Well," replied the foreman, "we got a Mexican cook on the ranch and every Saturday night we dress him in women's clothes and six of us take him dancing."

"Not me!" declared Holston. "I don't go for that kind of stuff."

"Neither does the Mex," says Davis, "that's why it takes six of us."

And it is not only a question of sex. The whole society, millions of people around you, are conditioning you, knowingly, unknowingly. They have been conditioned. They may not be aware that they are destructive and violent. They may be thinking that they are being helpful to you. They may be thinking that they are doing all this great service to you out of compassion, because they love humanity. They have been conditioned so deeply that they are unaware what they are doing to their children.

The teachers, the lecturers, the professors, they are the instruments, subtle instruments of conditioning people. The priests, the psychoanalysts, they are very clever and very efficient people at conditioning; they know the whole strategy of it. They know how to manipulate, distort, how to give you a pseudo personality and take away your essential core.

Discipline is totally different. Discipline is out of your own choice; it is out of your own will. Discipline, the very word, comes from a root which means learning. Discipline means you start learning on your own, because nobody seems to teach you the truth. People are interested in teaching you Hinduism, communism, Mohammedanism; nobody is interested in teaching you the truth. When you start seeking, searching, learning, on your own -- knowing perfectly well that nobody is going to support you, you have to go alone -- discipline begins.

Discipline is your protection against conditioning. Discipline is your effort to get rid of all conditioning. Discipline is your rebellion, your revolution. To be a disciple simply means to be with a man who is not going to condition you. A master is one who unconditions you. That is the definition of a true master: one who UNconditions you, simply unconditions you, and does not REcondition you.

That is one of the objections against me raised in India and in other countries, too: that I am giving people so much freedom that they will misuse it. I know that freedom can be misused if it is not rooted in meditation, but freedom is such a supreme value that even if there is a risk of misuse, it HAS to be given. Slavery can never be misused by the slave because he is not his own master; then too, it is slavery and is continuously being misused by those who are in power. Slavery is a sin, and howsoever decorated, it is ugly. Freedom can be misused, but it is better to misuse freedom than to be a slave, because you cannot misuse freedom for long.

Freedom -- its use and misuse both -- gives insight. One learns only through mistakes. That is the way of maturity. Maybe in the interim period, when for the first time you come out of the prison, you may misuse your freedom for a little while. You may drink too much, eat too much, but for how long? And this freedom that a master gives is given through making you more conscious, more aware. And that is the safety valve: the more you are aware, the less is the possibility of misusing freedom -- because misusing it will be suicidal.

Discipline is that which you accept on your own. You are not forced to be a sannyasin; a deep longing arises in you. Something hidden in you takes the challenge. Some seed sprouts... you hear some unheard music... you become attracted to some unknown, mysterious force. But the decision is always yours; it is not imposed on you. YOU decide that you would like to learn, that you would like to seek and search. Out of that longing for truth, discipline begins.

And you are always free to stop. You are always free to drop out of sannyas. You are always free not to be related to me anymore. The guards on the gate are for outsiders so that they cannot enter inside unless they are ready; the guards are not for the insiders to prevent them from leaving. That is the difference. In a jail the guards are for the insiders so that they cannot get out.

Here there are guards, but they are not for the insiders. If somebody wants to get out he gets out with all my blessings. It was his decision to be in; it is his decision to drop out of it. He is a free soul. It is nobody else's business to impose anything upon him.

Dharmendra, discipline comes out of your own inner feel, out of your own love. It is surrender but it is not a slavery. It is a surrender but not a slavery because YOU are doing it. If it is forced, then it is slavery, then it is conditioning.

Avoid all conditioning situations. Avoid people who condition you, even though they say it is for your own sake; even though they say it is for your own good, beware of all those poisoners. They have done enough harm to humanity. It is because of these people that real humanity has not yet been born.

My whole effort here is to bring a new human being on the earth: free, alert, conscious, responsible, doing things according to his own inner feelings, likings, leanings, not serving somebody else's purpose, living his life according to his own light.

Source - Osho Book "The Dhammapada, Vol 8"
