

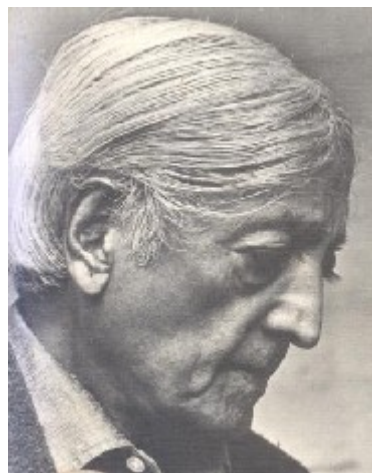
Freedom from the Known

by Jiddu Krishnamurti via sadh *Monday, Oct 20 2008, 10:03am*

international / personal development / literature

Chapter 6

FEAR, PLEASURE, SORROW, thought and violence are all interrelated. Most of us take pleasure in violence, in disliking somebody, hating a particular race or group of people, having antagonistic feelings towards others. But in a state of mind in which all violence has come to an end there is a joy which is very different from the pleasure of violence with its conflicts, hatreds and fears.



Jiddu Krishnamurti

Can we go to the very root of violence and be free from it? Otherwise we shall live everlastingly in battle with each other. If that is the way you want to live - and apparently most people do - then carry on; if you say, 'Well, I'm sorry, violence can never end', then you and I have no means of communication, you have blocked yourself; but if you say there might be a different way of living, then we shall be able to communicate with each other.

So let us consider together, those of us who can communicate, whether it is at all possible totally to end every form of violence in ourselves and still live in this monstrously brutal world. I think it is possible. I don't want to have a breath of hate, jealousy, anxiety or fear in me. I want to live completely at peace. Which doesn't mean that I want to die. I want to live on this marvellous earth, so full, so rich, so beautiful. I want to look at the trees, flowers, rivers, meadows, women, boys and girls, and at the same time live completely at peace with myself and with the world. What can I do?

If we know how to look at violence, not only outwardly in society - the wars, the riots, the national antagonisms and class conflicts - but also in ourselves, then perhaps we shall be able to go beyond it.

Here is a very complex problem. For centuries upon centuries man has been violent; religions have tried to tame him throughout the world and none of them have succeeded. So if we are going into the question we must, it seems to me, be at least very serious about it because it will lead us into quite a different domain, but if we want merely to play with the problem for intellectual entertainment we shall not get very far.

You may feel that you yourself are very serious about the problem but that as long as so many other people in the world are not serious and are not prepared to do anything about it, what is the good of your doing anything? I don't care whether they take it seriously or not. I take it seriously, that is enough. I am not my brother's keeper. I myself, as a human being, feel very strongly about this question of violence and I will see to it that in myself I am not violent - but I cannot tell you or anybody else, 'Don't be violent.' It has no meaning - unless you yourself want it. So if you yourself really want to understand this problem of violence let us continue on our journey of exploration together.

Is this problem of violence out there or here? Do you want to solve the problem in the outside world or are you questioning violence itself as it is in you? If you are free of violence in yourself the question is, 'How am I to live in a world full of violence, acquisitiveness, greed, envy, brutality? Will I not be destroyed?' That is the inevitable question which is invariably asked. When you ask such a question it seems to me you are not actually living peacefully. If you live peacefully you will have no problem at all. You may be imprisoned because you refuse to join the army or shot because you refuse to fight - but that is not a problem; you will be shot. It is extraordinarily important to understand this.

We are trying to understand violence as a fact, not as an idea, as a fact which exists in the human being, and the human being is myself. And to go into the problem I must be completely vulnerable, open, to it. I must expose myself to myself - not necessarily expose myself to you because you may not be interested - but I must be in a state of mind that demands to see this thing right to the end and at no point stops and says I will go no further.

Now it must be obvious to me that I am a violent human being. I have experienced violence in anger, violence in my sexual demands, violence in hatred, creating enmity, violence in jealousy and so on - I have experienced it, I have known it, and I say to myself, 'I want to understand this whole problem not just one fragment of it expressed in war, but this aggression in man which also exists in the animals and of which I am a part.'

Violence is not merely killing another. It is violence when we use a sharp word, when we make a gesture to brush away a person, when we obey because there is fear. So violence isn't merely organized butchery in the name of God, in the name of society or country. Violence is much more subtle, much deeper, and we are inquiring into the very depths of violence.

When you call yourself an Indian or a Muslim or a Christian or a European, or anything else, you are being violent. Do you see why it is violent? Because you are separating yourself from the rest of mankind. When you separate yourself by belief, by nationality, by tradition, it breeds violence. So a man who is seeking to understand violence does not belong to any country, to any religion, to any political party or partial system; he is concerned with the total understanding of mankind.

Now there are two primary schools of thought with regard to violence, one which says, 'Violence is innate in man' and the other which says, 'Violence is the result of the social and cultural heritage in which man lives.' We are not concerned with which school we belong to - it is of no importance. What is important is the fact that we are violent, not the reason for it.

One of the most common expressions of violence is anger. When my wife or sister is attacked I say I am righteously angry; when my country is attacked, my ideas, my principles, my way of life, I am righteously angry. I am also angry when my habits are attacked or my petty little opinions. When you tread on my toes or insult me I get angry, or if you run away with my wife and I get jealous, that jealousy is called righteous because she is my property. And all this anger is morally justified. But to

kill for my country is also justified. So when we are talking about anger, which is a part of violence, do we look at anger in terms of righteous and unrighteous anger according to our own inclinations and environmental drive, or do we see only anger? Is there righteous anger ever? Or is there only anger? There is no good influence or bad influence, only influence, but when you are influenced by something which doesn't suit me I call it an evil influence.

The moment you protect your family, your country, a bit of coloured rag called a flag, a belief, an idea, a dogma, the thing that you demand or that you hold, that very protection indicates anger. So can you look at anger without any explanation or justification, without saying, 'I must protect my goods', or 'I was right to be angry', or 'How stupid of me to be angry'? Can you look at anger as if it were something by itself? Can you look at it completely objectively, which means neither defending it nor condemning it? Can you?

Can I look at you if I am antagonistic to you or if I am thinking what a marvellous person you are? I can see you only when I look at you with a certain care in which neither of these things is involved. Now, can I look at anger in the same way, which means that I am vulnerable to the problem, I do not resist it, I am watching this extraordinary phenomenon without any reaction to it?

It is very difficult to look at anger dispassionately because it is a part of me, but that is what I am trying to do. Here I am, a violent human being, whether I am black, brown, white or purple. I am not concerned with whether I have inherited this violence or whether society has produced it in me; all I am concerned with is whether it is at all possible to be free from it. To be free from violence means everything to me. It is more important to me than sex, food, position, for this thing is corrupting me. It is destroying me and destroying the world, and I want to understand it, I want to be beyond it. I feel responsible for all this anger and violence in the world. I feel responsible - it isn't just a lot of words - and I say to myself, 'I can do something only if I am beyond anger myself, beyond violence, beyond nationality'. And this feeling I have that I must understand the violence in myself brings tremendous vitality and passion to find out.

But to be beyond violence I cannot suppress it, I cannot deny it, I cannot say, 'Well, it is a part of me and that's that', or 'I don't want it'. I have to look at it, I have to study it, I must become very intimate with it and I cannot become intimate with it if I condemn it or justify it. We do condemn it, though; we do justify it. Therefore I am saying, stop for the time being condemning it or justifying it.

Now, if you want to stop violence, if you want to stop wars, how much vitality, how much of yourself, do you give to it? Isn't it important to you that your children are killed, that your sons go into the army where they are bullied and butchered? Don't you care? My God, if that doesn't interest you, what does? Guarding your money? Having a good time? Taking drugs? Don't you see that this violence in yourself is destroying your children? Or do you see it only as some abstraction?

All right then, if you are interested, attend with all your heart and mind to find out. Don't just sit back and say, 'Well, tell us all about it'. I point out to you that you cannot look at anger nor at violence with eyes that condemn or justify and that if this violence is not a burning problem to you, you cannot put those two things away. So first you have to learn; you have to learn how to look at anger, how to look at your husband, your wife, your children; you have to listen to the politician, you have to learn why you are not objective, why you condemn or justify. You have to learn that you condemn and justify because it is part of the social structure you live in, your conditioning as a German or an Indian or a Negro or an American or whatever you happen to have been born, with all the dulling of the mind that this conditioning results in. To learn, to discover, something fundamental you must have the capacity to go deeply. If you have a blunt instrument, a dull instrument, you cannot go deeply. So what we are doing is sharpening the instrument, which is the

mind - the mind which has been made dull by all this justifying and condemning. You can penetrate deeply only if your mind is as sharp as a needle and as strong as a diamond. It is no good just sitting back and asking, 'How am I to get such a mind?' You have to want it as you want your next meal, and to have it you must see that what makes your mind dull and stupid is this sense of invulnerability which has built walls round itself and which is part of this condemnation and justification. If the mind can be rid of that, then you can look, study, penetrate, and perhaps come to a state that is totally aware of the whole problem.

So let us come back to the central issue - is it possible to eradicate violence in ourselves? It is a form of violence to say, 'You haven't changed, why haven't you?' I am not doing that. It doesn't mean a thing to me to convince you of anything. It is your life, not my life. The way you live is your affair. I am asking whether it is possible for a human being living psychologically in any society to clear violence from himself inwardly? If it is, the very process will produce a different way of living in this world.

Most of us have accepted violence as a way of life. Two dreadful wars have taught us nothing except to build more and more barriers between human beings that is, between you and me. But for those of us who want to be rid of violence, how is it to be done? I do not think anything is going to be achieved through analysis, either by ourselves or by a professional. We might be able to modify ourselves slightly, live a little more quietly with a little more affection, but in itself it will not give total perception. But I must know how to analyse which means that in the process of analysis my mind becomes extraordinarily sharp, and it is that quality of sharpness, of attention, of seriousness, which will give total perception. One hasn't the eyes to see the whole thing at a glance; this clarity of the eye is possible only if one can see the details, then jump. Some of us, in order to rid ourselves of violence, have used a concept, an ideal, called non-violence, and we think by having an ideal of the opposite to violence, non-violence, we can get rid of the fact, the actual - but we cannot. We have had ideals without number, all the sacred books are full of them, yet we are still violent - so why not deal with violence itself and forget the word altogether?

If you want to understand the actual you must give your whole attention, all your energy, to it. That attention and energy are distracted when you create a fictitious, ideal world. So can you completely banish the ideal? The man who is really serious, with the urge to find out what truth is, what love is, has no concept at all. He lives only in what is.

To investigate the fact of your own anger you must pass no judgement on it, for the moment you conceive of its opposite you condemn it and therefore you cannot see it as it is. When you say you dislike or hate someone that is a fact, although it sounds terrible. If you look at it, go into it completely, it ceases, but if you say, 'I must not hate; I must have love in my heart', then you are living in a hypocritical world with double standards. To live completely, fully, in the moment is to live with what is, the actual, without any sense of condemnation or justification - then you understand it so totally that you are finished with it. When you see clearly the problem is solved.


But can you see the face of violence clearly - the face of violence not only outside you but inside you, which means that you are totally free from violence because you have not admitted ideology through which to get rid of it? This requires very deep meditation not just a verbal agreement or disagreement.

You have now read a series of statements but have you really understood? Your conditioned mind, your way of life, the whole structure of the society in which you live, prevent you from looking at a fact and being entirely free from it immediately. You say, 'I will think about it; I will consider whether it is possible to be free from violence or not. I will try to be free.' That is one of the most

dreadful statements you can make, 'I will try'. There is no trying, no doing your best. Either you do it or you don't do it. You are admitting time while the house is burning. The house is burning as a result of the violence throughout the world and in yourself and you say, 'Let me think about it. Which ideology is best to put out the fire?' When the house is on fire, do you argue about the colour of the hair of the man who brings the water?

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