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**Subject: Krishnamurti on Effort, observing what *is***

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. . . effort is a strife or a struggle to transform that which *is* into something which you wish it to be. I am only talking about psychological struggle, not the struggle with a physical problem, like engineering or some discovery or transformation which is purely technical. I am only talking of that struggle which is psychological and which always overcomes the technical. You may build with great care a marvellous society, using the infinite knowledge science has given us. But so long as the psychological strife and struggle and battle are not understood and the psychological overtones and currents are not overcome, the structure of society, however marvellously built, is bound to crash, as has happened over and over again.

Effort is a distraction from what *is*. The moment I accept what *is* there is no struggle. Any form of struggle or strife is an indication of distraction; and distraction, which is effort, must exist so long as psychologically I wish to transform what *is* into something it is not.

. . . It is only if you are aware of inward insufficiency and live with it without escape, accepting it wholly, that you will discover an extraordinary tranquillity, a tranquillity which is not put together, made up, but a tranquillity which comes with understanding of what *is*.

Celebrating at 4:26 this aft, the conclusion of my 38th revolution around Sol. The sanskrit meaning of the word "mantra" is, 'consider not becoming.' As human beings, we are tremendously conditioned to always be striving towards some goal. To become other than what we are now. The only state of being we ever actually know is right now, this moment. But how fervently we continuously are "elsewhere" than this moment, than the now. Krishnamurti discusses at great length, "observe what *is*." Sounds extraordinarily simple. And yet how unfamiliar we are with the actuality of such being. To observe the fact of what *is*, free from our own opinions, judgement, bias, free from condemnation, resistance, approval—to simply observe the actuality of what *is*—in such self-awareness begins true intelligence. Existence *is* infinite. To think is to abstract. But the totality of existence is NOT an abstraction! We confine ourselves to a limited, hence fragmentary understanding of this when we attempt to live life wholly through the process of thought, of the intellect, as if this alone possessed closure:

It is important to understand from the very beginning that I am not formulating any philosophy or any theological structure of ideas or theological concepts. It seems to me that all ideologies are utterly idiotic. What is important is not a philosophy of life but to observe what is actually taking place in our daily life, inwardly and outwardly. If you observe very closely what is taking place and examine it, you will see that it is based on an intellectual conception, and the intellect is not the whole field of existence; it is a fragment, and a fragment, however cleverly put together, however ancient and traditional, is still a small part of existence whereas we have to deal with the totality of life. And when we look at what is taking place in the world we begin to understand that there is no outer and inner process; there is only one unitary process, it is a whole, total movement, the inner movement expressing itself as the outer and the outer reacting again on the inner. To be able to look at this seems to me all that is needed, because if we know how to look, then the whole thing becomes very clear, and to look needs no philosophy, no teacher.

Nobody need tell you how to look. You just look.

Can you then, seeing this whole picture, seeing it not verbally but actually, can you easily, spontaneously, transform yourself? That is the real issue. Is it possible to bring about a complete revolution in the psyche? . . .

If I were foolish enough to give you a system and if you were foolish enough to follow it, you would merely be copying, imitating, conforming, accepting, and when you do that you have set up in yourself the authority of another and hence there is conflict between you and that authority. You feel you must do such and such a thing because you have been told to do it and yet you are incapable of doing it. You have your own particular inclinations, tendencies and pressures which conflict with the system you think you ought to follow and therefore there is a contradiction. So you will lead a double life between the ideology of the system and the actuality of your daily existence. In trying to conform to the ideology, you suppress yourself—whereas what is actually true is not the ideology but what you are. If you try to study yourself according to another you will always remain a secondhand human being. . . .

So you see that you cannot depend on anybody. There *is* no guide, no teacher, no authority. There is only you—your relationship to others and with the world—there is nothing else. When you realise this, it either brings great despair, from which comes cynicism and bitterness, or, in facing the fact that you and nobody else are responsible for the world and for yourself, for what you think, what you feel, how you act, all self-pity goes. Normally we thrive on blaming others, which is a form of self-pity.

— Krishnamurti, *Freedom From The Known*, 1969, pp. 15, 16, 17

Consider not becoming. Consider yourself as you are now—not as you hope to be "later," not as you "will be"—but simply as you are in this moment. Anything else but what we are NOW is illusion. This moment is all any of us ever have. How curious to see the mechanism of escape from this totality—that we are so conditioned to be *anywhere else* but actually and totally in this, the present, and only, moment.

— ratitor dave

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from *The First And Last Freedom*, by J. Krishnamurti, 1954, pp. 66-70:

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## CHAPTER VII

### EFFORT

FOR MOST OF US, our whole life is based on effort, some kind of volition. We cannot conceive of an action without volition, without effort; our life is based on it. Our social, economic and so-called spiritual life is a series of efforts, always culminating in a certain result. And we think effort is essential, necessary.

Why do we make effort? Is it not, put simply, in order to achieve a result, to become something, to reach a goal? If we do not make an effort, we think we shall stagnate. We have an idea about the goal towards which we are constantly striving; and this striving has become part of our life. If we want to alter ourselves, if we want to bring about a radical change in ourselves, we make a tremendous effort to eliminate the old habits, to resist the habitual environmental influences and so on. So we are used to this series of efforts in order to find or achieve something, in order to live at all.

Is not all such effort the activity of the self? Is not effort self-centred activity? If we make an effort from the centre of the self, it must inevitably produce more conflict, more confusion, more misery. Yet we keep on making effort after effort. Very few of us realize that the self-centred activity of effort does not clear up any of our problems. On the contrary, it increases our confusion and our misery and our sorrow. We know this; and yet we continue hoping somehow to break through this self-centred activity of effort, the action of the will.

I think we shall understand the significance of life, if we understand what it means to make an effort. Does happiness come through effort? Have you ever tried to be happy? It is impossible, is it not? You struggle to be happy and there is no happiness, is there? Joy does not come through suppression, through control or indulgence. You may indulge but there is bitterness at the end. You may suppress or control, but there is always strife in the hidden. Therefore happiness does not come through effort, nor joy through control and suppression; and still all our life is a series of suppressions, a series of controls, a series of regretful indulgences. Also there is a constant overcoming, a constant struggle with our passions, our greed and our stupidity. So do we not strive, struggle, make effort, in the hope of finding happiness, finding something which will give us a feeling of peace, a sense of love? Yet does love or understanding come by strife? I think it is very important to understand what we mean by struggle, strife or effort.

Does not effort mean a struggle to change what *is* into what is not, or into what it should be or should become? That is we are constantly struggling to avoid facing what *is*, or we are trying to get away from it or to transform or modify what *is*. A man who is truly content is the man who understands what *is*, gives the right significance to what *is*. That is true contentment; it is not concerned with having few or many possessions but with the understanding of the whole significance of what *is*; and that can only come when you recognize what *is*, when you are aware of it, not when you are trying to modify it or change it.

So we see that effort is a strife or a struggle to transform that which *is* into something which you wish it to be. I am only talking about psychological struggle, not the struggle with a physical problem, like engineering or some discovery or transformation which is purely technical. I am only talking of that struggle which is psychological and which always overcomes the technical. You may build with great care a marvellous society, using the infinite knowledge science has given us. But so long as the psychological strife and struggle and battle are not understood and the psychological overtones and currents are not overcome, the structure of society, however marvellously built, is bound to crash, as has happened over and over again.

Effort is a distraction from what *is*. The moment I accept what *is* there is no struggle. Any form of struggle or strife is an indication of distraction; and distraction, which is effort, must exist so long as psychologically I wish to transform what *is* into something it is not.

First we must be free to see that joy and happiness do not come through effort. Is creation through effort, or is there creation only with the cessation of effort? When do you write, paint or sing? When do you create? Surely when there is no effort, when you are completely open, when on all levels you are in complete communication, completely integrated. Then there is joy and then you begin to sing or write a poem or paint or fashion something. The moment of creation is not born of struggle.

Perhaps in understanding the question of creativeness we shall be able to understand what we mean by effort. Is creativeness the outcome of effort, and are we aware in those moments when we are creative? Or is creativeness a sense of total self-forgetfulness, that sense when there is no turmoil, when one is wholly unaware of the movement of thought, when there is only a complete, full, rich being? Is that state the result of travail, of struggle, of conflict, of effort? I do not know if you have ever noticed that when you do something easily, swiftly, there is no effort, there is complete absence of struggle; but as our lives are mostly a series of battles, conflicts and struggles, we cannot imagine a life, a state of being, in which strife has fully ceased.

To understand the state of being without strife, that state of creative existence, surely one must inquire into the whole problem of effort. We mean by effort the striving to fulfil oneself, to become something, don't we? I am this, and I want to become that; I am not that, and I must become that. In becoming 'that', there is strife, there is battle, conflict, struggle. In this struggle we are concerned inevitably with fulfilment through the gaining of an end; we seek self-fulfilment in an object, in a person, in an idea, and that demands constant battle, struggle, the effort to become, to fulfil. So we have taken this effort as inevitable; and I wonder if it *is* inevitable— this struggle to become something? Why is there this struggle? Where

there is the desire for fulfilment, in whatever degree and at whatever level, there must be struggle. Fulfilment is the motive, the drive behind the effort; whether it is in the big executive, the housewife, or a poor man, there is this battle to become, to fulfil, going on.

Now why is there the desire to fulfil oneself? Obviously, the desire to fulfil, to become something, arises when there is awareness of being nothing. Because I am nothing, because I am insufficient, empty, inwardly poor, I struggle to become something; outwardly or inwardly I struggle to fulfil myself in a person, in a thing, in an idea. To fill that void is the whole process of our existence. Being aware that we are empty, inwardly poor, we struggle either to collect things outwardly, or to cultivate inward riches. There is effort only when there is an escape from that inward void through action, through contemplation, through acquisition, through achievement, through power, and so on. That is our daily existence. I am aware of my insufficiency, my inward poverty, and I struggle to run away from it or to fill it. This running away, avoiding, or trying to cover up the void, entails struggle, strife, effort.

Now if one does not make an effort to run away, what happens? One lives with that loneliness, that emptiness; and in accepting that emptiness one will find that there comes a creative state which has nothing to do with strife, with effort. Effort exists only so long as we are trying to avoid that inward loneliness, emptiness, but when we look at it, observe it, when we accept what *is* without avoidance, we will find there comes a state of being in which all strife ceases. That state of being is creativeness and it is not the result of strife.

But when there is understanding of what *is*, which is emptiness, inward insufficiency, when one lives with that insufficiency and understands it fully, there comes creative reality, creative intelligence, which alone brings happiness.

Therefore action as we know it is really reaction, it is a ceaseless becoming, which is the denial, the avoidance of what *is*; but when there is awareness of emptiness without choice, without condemnation or justification, then in that understanding of what *is* there is action, and this action is creative being. You will understand this if you are aware of yourself in action. Observe yourself as you are acting, not only outwardly but see also the movement of your thought and feeling. When you are aware of this movement you will see that the thought process, which is also feeling and action, is based on an idea of becoming. The idea of becoming arises only when there is a sense of insecurity, and that sense of insecurity comes when one is aware of the inward void. If you are aware of that process of thought and feeling, you will see that there is a constant battle going on, an effort to change, to modify, to alter what *is*. This is the effort to become, and becoming is a direct avoidance of what *is*. Through self-knowledge, through constant awareness, you will find that strife, battle, the conflict of becoming, leads to pain, to sorrow and ignorance. It is only if you are aware of inward insufficiency and live with it without escape, accepting it wholly, that you will discover an extraordinary tranquillity, a tranquillity which is not put together, made up, but a tranquillity which comes with understanding of what *is*. Only in that state of tranquillity is there creative being.

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***We are always comparing what we are with what we should be. The should-be is a projection of what we think we ought to be. Contradiction exists when there is comparison, not only with something or somebody, but with what you were yesterday, and hence there is conflict between what has been and what is. There is what is only when there is no comparison at all, and to live with what is, is to be peaceful. Then you can give your whole attention without any distraction to what is within yourself—whether it be despair, ugliness, brutality, fear, anxiety, loneliness—and live with it completely; then there is no contradiction and hence no conflict.***