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## DEATH 2.

J. Krishnamurti, *Commentaries On Living Second series*

double-quotation: visitor

"Aren't you asking too much? To understand death we must be in despair; isn't that what you are saying?"

Not at all, sir. Is there despair when there is not that state which we call hope? Why should we always think in opposites? Is hope the opposite of despair? If it is, then that hope holds within it the seed of despair, and such hope is tinged with fear. If there is to be understanding, is it not necessary to be free of the opposites? The state of the mind is of the greatest importance. The activities of despair and hope prevent the understanding or the experiencing of death. The movement of the opposites must cease. The mind must approach the problem of death with a totally new awareness in which the familiar, the recognizing process, is absent.

"I am afraid I don't quite understand that statement. I think I vaguely grasp the significance of the mind's being free from the opposites. Though it is an enormously difficult task, I think I see the necessity of it. But what it means to be free from the recognizing process altogether eludes 'me.'"

Recognition is the process of the known, it is the outcome of the past. The mind is frightened of that with which it is not familiar. If you knew death, there would be no fear of it, no need for elaborate explanations. But you cannot know death, it is something totally new, never experienced before. What is experienced becomes the known, the past, and it is from this past, from this known that recognition takes place. As long as there is this movement from the past, the new cannot be.

"Yes, yes, I am beginning to feel that, sir."

What we are talking over together is not something to be thought about later, but to be directly experienced as we go along. This experience cannot be stored up, for if it is, it becomes memory, and memory, the way of recognition, blocks the new, the unknown. Death is the unknown. The problem is not what death is and what happens thereafter, but for the mind to cleanse itself of the past, of the known. Then the living mind can enter the abode of death, it can meet death, the unknown.

"Are you suggesting that one can know death while still alive?"

Accident, disease and old age bring death, but under these circumstances it is not possible to be fully conscious. There is pain, hope or despair, the fear of isolation, and the mind, the self, is consciously or unconsciously battling against death, the inevitable. With fearful resistance against death, we pass away. But is it possible—without resistance, without morbidity, without a sadistic or suicidal urge, and while fully alive, mentally vigorous—to enter the house of death? This is possible only when the mind dies to the known, to the self. So our problem is not death, but for the mind to free itself from the centuries of gathered psychological experience, from ever-mounting memory, the strengthening and refining of the self.

"But how is this to be done? How can the mind free itself from its own bondages? It seems to me that either an outside agency is necessary, or else the higher and nobler part of the mind must intervene to purify the mind of the past."

This is quite a complex issue, is it not? The outside agency may be environmental influence, or it may be something beyond the boundaries of the mind. If the outside agency is environmental influence, it is that very influence, with its traditions, beliefs and cultures, that has held the mind in bondage. If the outside agency is something beyond the mind, then thought in any form cannot touch it. Thought is the outcome of time; thought is anchored to the past, it can never be free from the past. If thought frees itself from the past, it ceases to be thought. To speculate upon what is beyond the mind is utterly vain. For the intervention of that which is beyond thought, thought which is the self must cease. Mind must

be without any movement, it must be still with the stillness of no motive. Mind cannot invite it. The mind may and does divide its own field of activities as noble and ignoble, desirable and undesirable, higher and lower, but all such divisions and subdivisions are within the boundaries of the mind itself; so any movement of the mind, in any direction, is the reaction of the past, of the 'me, of time. This truth is the only liberating factor, and he who does not perceive this truth will ever be in bondage, do what he may; his penances, vows, disciplines, sacrifices may have sociological and comforting significance, but they have no value in relation to truth.