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TO CHANGE SOCIETY, YOU MUST BREAK AWAY FROM IT (1)

J. Krishnamurti, *Commentaries On Living Third series*

double-quotation: visitor

Meditation is an intensification of the mind which is in the fullness of silence. The mind is not still like some tamed, frightened or disciplined animal; it is still as the waters are still many fathoms down. The stillness there is not like that on the surface when the winds die. This stillness has a life and a movement of its own which is related to the outer flow of life, but is untouched by it. Its intensity is not that of some powerful machine which has been put together by cunning, capable hands; it is as simple and natural as love, as lightning, as a full- flowing river.

He said he had been in politics up to his ears. He had done the usual things to climb the ladder of success—cultivated the right people, got on familiar terms with the leaders who had themselves climbed the very same ladder—and his climb had been rapid. He had been sent abroad on

many of the important committees, and was regarded with respect by those who count; for he was sincere and incorruptible, albeit as ambitious as the rest of them. Added to all this, he was well-read, and words came easily to him. But now, by some fortunate chance, he was tired of this game of helping the country by boosting himself and becoming a very important person. He was tired of it, not because he couldn't climb any higher, but because, through a natural process of intelligence, he had come to see that man's deep betterment does not lie entirely in planning, in efficiency, in the scramble for power. So he had thrown it all overboard, and was beginning to consider anew the whole of life.

What do you mean by the whole of life?

"I have spent many years on a branch of the river, as it were, and I want to spend the remaining years of my life on the river itself. Although I enjoyed every minute of the political struggle, I am not leaving politics regretfully; and now I wish to contribute to the betterment of society from my heart and not from the ever-calculating mind. What I take from

society must be returned to it at least tenfold."

If one may ask, why are you thinking in terms of giving and taking?

"I have taken so much from society; and all that it has given me I must give back to it many times."

What do you owe to society?

"Everything I have: my bank account, my education, my name—Oh, so many things!"

In actuality, you have not taken anything from society, because you are part of it. If you were a separate entity, unconnected with society, then you could give back what you have taken. But you are part of society, part of the culture which has put you together. You can return borrowed money; but what can you give back to society as long as you are part of society?

"Because of society I have money, food, clothing, shelter, and I must do something in return. I have profited by my gathering within the framework of society, and it would be ungrateful of me to turn my back on it. I must do some good work for society—good work in the large sense, and not as a 'do-gooder'."