

## *FEAR AND ESCAPE*

J. Krishnamurti, *Commentaries On Living*

The passenger in the next seat was very talkative. He was unfamiliar with those mountains, and had dozed as we climbed; but now he was awake and eager for a talk. It appeared that he was going out on some business for the first time; he seemed to have many interests, and spoke with considerable information about them.

He was saying how difficult it was not to have fear, not particularly of a crash, but of all the accidents of life. He was married and had children, and there was always fear-not of the future alone, but of everything in general. It was a fear that had no particular object, and though he was successful, this fear made his life weary and painful.

Fear can exist only in relation to something. As an abstraction, fear is a mere word, and the word is not the actual fear. Do you know specifically of what you are afraid?

"I have never been able to lay my finger on it, and my dreams too are very vague; but threading through them all there is fear. I have talked to friends and doctors about it, but they have either laughed it off or otherwise not been of much help. It has always eluded me, and I want to be free of the beastly thing."

Are you afraid of death?

"Not particularly, though I would like to have a quick death and not a long-drawn-out one. I don't think it is my family that I have this anxiety about, nor is it my job."

"My wife and I love each other; she wouldn't think of looking at another man, and I am not attracted to other women. We find completeness in each other. "

What makes you so sure of your intimate relationship? When you say that you and your wife find completeness in each other, what do you mean?

"We find happiness in each other: companionship, understanding, and so on. In the deeper sense, we depend on each other. It would be a tremendous blow if anything happened to either of us. We are in that sense dependent."

Without your wife, you would be alone, you would be lost in the deepest sense; so she is essential to you, is she not? You depend on her for your happiness, and this dependence is called love. You are afraid to be alone. She is always there to cover up the fact of your loneliness, as you cover up hers; but the fact is different still there, is it not? We use each other to cover up this loneliness; we run away from it in so many ways, in so many forms of relationship, and each such relationship becomes a dependence. I listen to the radio because music makes me happy, it takes me away from

myself; books and knowledge are also a very convenient escape from myself. And on all these things we depend.

You do not like what you are, and so you run away from yourself, from what *is*.

"That is fairly clear. I see something in that, it makes sense. But why does one run away? What is one escaping from?" From your own loneliness, your own emptiness, from what you are. If you run away without seeing what *is*, you obviously cannot understand it; so first you have to stop running, escaping, observe what *is* if you are always criticizing it, if you like or dislike it. You call it loneliness and run away from it; and the very running away from what *is* is fear.