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TO CHANGE SOCIETY, YOU MUST BREAK AWAY FROM IT (2)

J. Krishnamurti, *Commentaries On Living Third series*

double-quotation: visitor

I understand what you mean; but even if you returned all you have gathered, would that absolve you from your debt? What society has yielded through your efforts is comparatively easy to return; you can give it to the poor, or to the State. And then what? You still have your 'duty' to society, for you are still part of it; you are one of its citizens. As long as you belong to society, identify yourself with it, you are both the giver and the taker. You maintain it; you support its structure, do you not?

"I do. I am, as you say, an integral part of society; without it, I am not.

Since I am both the good and the bad of society, I must remove the bad and uphold the good."

In any given culture or society, the 'good' is the accepted, the respectable.

You want to maintain that which is noble within the structure of society;
is that it?

"What I want to do is to change the social pattern in which man is caught.
I mean this most earnestly."

The social pattern is set up by man; it is not independent of man, though it has a life of its own, and man is not independent of it; they are interrelated. Change within the pattern is no change at all; it is mere modification, reformation. Only by breaking away from the social pattern without building another can you 'help' society. As long as you belong to society, you are only helping it to deteriorate. All societies, including the most marvellously utopian, have within them the seeds of their own corruption. To change society, you must break away from it. You must cease to be what society is: acquisitive, ambitious, envious, power-seeking, and so on.

"Do you mean I must become a monk, a *sannyasi*?"

Certainly not. The *sannyasi* has merely renounced the outer show of the world, of society, but inwardly he is still a part of it; he is still burning with the desire to achieve, to gain, to become.

"Yes, I see that."

Surely, since you have burnt yourself in politics, your problem is not only to break away from society, but to come totally to life again, to love and be simple. Without love, do what you may, you will not know the total action which alone can save man.

"That is true, sir: we don't love, we aren't really simple."

Why? Because you are so concerned with reforms, with duties, with respectability, with becoming something, with breaking through to the other side. In the name of another, you are concerned with yourself; you are caught in your own cockle-shell. You think you are the centre of this beautiful earth. You never pause to look at a tree, at a flower, at the

flowing river; and if by some chance you do look, your eyes are filled with the things of the mind, and not with beauty and love.

"Again, that is true ; but what is one to do?"

Look and be simple.