

BE WHO YOU ARE

Jean Klein, a musicologist and doctor from Central Europe, spent his early years inquiring about the essence of life. He had the inner conviction that there was a 'principle' independent of all society and felt the urge to explore this conviction.

His exploration led him to India where he was introduced through a 'direct approach' to the non-mental dimension of life. Through living in this complete openness, he was taken, one timeless moment, by a sudden, clear awakening in his real nature. It was not a mystical experience, a new state, but the continuum in life, the non-state in light of which birth, death and all experience take place.

From 1960 he led a quiet life teaching in Europe and later in the United States.

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I

During these meetings we shall discuss the knowledge of our true nature. But the word knowledge will here be used in its strict meaning of metaphysical realization, in other words, the actual establishing of ourselves in that which we truly are. It is therefore a total achievement.

This activity implies the absence of any preconceived idea. We do not strive to reach an imaginable goal, because the unknown can be neither imagined nor conceived. In matters of ordinary understanding, one makes use of analogy and reasoning. But here we shall be concerned with a formless absolute, an Ultimate Subject which can never be an object to be apprehended by the mind. Such research obviously implies that it be undertaken empty-handed, by a mind which has rejected the strategy of functioning with the already known. The projection of a "God", a "Self", a "where", a "when", are part of such a strategy and must be entirely laid aside. The only technique - if I may say so - which we can use, is based on an art of listening which is the supreme teaching of the traditional method.

Consequently, our meetings will provide neither information nor documentation in the usual sense of these words. We therefore suggest that no notes

be taken. What is important is for you to take up a passively-active attitude. This will enable you to convert into your own substance what such an attitude has allowed you to absorb. You should therefore listen with intense awareness and moreover strive to listen to yourself at the same time.

The ordinary man's activity is made up of reactions which are the expression of his egotistic make-up. He is a self surrounded by pleasant or unpleasant, friendly or hostile objects, and everything which impinges on him incites him to react according to his desires and his fears. Consequently, all his reactions are false, fragmentary, inadequate, because they are rooted in his egotistic outlook which is born of his delusion that he is a separate self. All the traditional doctrines teach us methods by which we may come to discard this state of reaction and reach an ego-less state where all reactions cease to be, giving place to impersonal actions which are true, impartial and adequate.

It may happen that even the egotistic man, under certain circumstances, responds to the challenge of outside objects in such a spontaneous and adequate manner. It does happen at times, when he comes face-to-face with something absolutely new, with something which it is impossible for him to integrate into his egotistical mental framework. It may also happen in the course of a poetical or aesthetic experience, because a thing of beauty, being an expression of harmony, possesses of its own nature a harmonizing power which, placing us temporarily in a state of perfect balance,

allows us to be in tune with Reality. But they are few and evanescent, these states of grace, which allow us to catch sight of the lost Paradise, and they remain unnoticed and unpursued because the ego rejects and shuns them, sensing in them a herald of its death.

All this must be thoroughly understood if one wishes to listen to a traditional teaching with any profit. In the presence of a master, the listening should be modelled on the above mentioned "state of grace", during which, for an instant, we may have emerged from the egotistic condition. An effort should be made to remember such states of nakedness, austerity, openness and clarity.

This state of listening is the first true step on the path.

Next we must undertake the observation of our desires so as to understand what it is that we are really seeking in all the objects which seem to please our appetites. We shall then realize that when the desired object is stripped of all its peculiarities, its distinctive characteristics, there remains a constant residue which is the true object of our search and which may be called fullness, bliss and peace. Now it so happens that nothing in the world of objects possesses perfect fullness, nor unconditional bliss. After the conquest of a desired object, we experience a few short moments of non-desire, but very soon desire reappears, and we embark on a new search.

This clearly indicates that what we really desire is not the object, because if it were, its possession would eliminate all desire. What is desired is bliss, *Ananda*,

which exists at all times in myself and in everything. The realization of the presence of this bliss was lost to me when I became a separate ego, thereby losing sight of my essential identity with it. From that moment on, the world of objects and duality was born. This duality makes it impossible for us to perceive the presence of this bliss which abides in ourselves as in all things. We can only perceive it in those objects which are more or less in accordance with our egotistic make-up. We are thus compelled to strive in a world where the pleasant and the unpleasant, where good and evil, oppose each other. Most of the time we are content to waver between pleasant-pleasure and unpleasant-pain, having no inkling of that true joy of which pleasure is only a shadow. But it may happen in certain cases, that we find ourselves face to face with an object which is in exceptional harmony with us. We may then transcend pleasure and experience joy; and discover that perfect joy lies beyond the pleasure-pain duality and is of another nature. Indeed pleasure is of its own nature fickle and transitory, hence its fleeting and disappointing character. When it reaches a very high degree of intensity and purity, it may do more than allay desire, it may completely satisfy it. . . for one moment. . . then it gives place to joy. This joy only arises with the suppression of desire, that is, of the ego. This is why true joy is impersonal, is beyond the ego. When we are immersed in perfect joy, we cease to be ourselves, only joy remains, and the object has disappeared with the subject.

I would like to look closely at certain points with

you, points which I have only outlined, but please bear in mind that our study shall be chiefly made up of suggestions, since over-clear and over-precise formulae might be an impediment to any inclination you might have of seeing a question through to its end.

Question

There are two questions I wish to put. The first concerns me personally, the second is of a more general nature. You said we should not take notes and nevertheless I have done so. As time goes by, the more I listen to you and almost unknown to myself, the more do I take up a position of standing aloof. But to obtain a direct contact, to plunge into ultimate reality, it seems to me that one must necessarily make use of the intellect. It is the intellect that views the path, or at least, he thinks he views it. He knows that intellect must be finally eliminated, or at least he thinks he knows it, and that is why it seems to me, that by taking notes of a few essential ideas, on reading them over and being, so to speak, impregnated by them, I get a better result than a direct dive into the unknown.

That is my first question. The second is this: you said at the outset that the search is carried out without searching. What then are we to think of those disciplines intended to condition us in some particular view of an approach to reality?

Answer

To understand this search, we must first rid ourselves of one foregone conclusion, that is, the idea that objects

exist independently of he who perceives them. Next, it must be understood that a simultaneous perception of several objects is impossible.

When we observe something attentively, consciousness penetrates vision and we are nothing else but vision. When we really listen to something, we are nothing else but hearing. We can never be both hearing and seeing simultaneously. We can pass very rapidly from one activity to another, from one thought to another, but absolute simultaneousness is impossible. Thus you can see for yourself that it is impossible to be thoroughly aware of any inner upsurge and take notes at the same time. This cannot but impair the quality of your listening. The word of the master must be seized with its import of the moment, intended to reach the hearer of that moment. The words read over in a page of notes have lost all their initial impact.

As to intellectual preparation, it should be unconditionally discarded, in order that the hearing lose nothing of its authenticity and spontaneity.

Disciplines also should be deliberately set aside, since they necessarily imply compulsion: there is always someone who wants to discipline and something which resists, so that there is always a state of effort and conflict. Before undertaking any profound search, one must be able to look into oneself. One must not however analyse oneself, compare or judge, but one must observe oneself as one would any object. If one attentively observes the inner welling-up, one is thereby absolutely and adequately situated and there

is no conflict. Discipline is of no use whatsoever, since things are naturally eliminated by discernment without it being necessary for us to treat them brutally. Even in the course of the technique known as "letting-go", a faint shadow of discipline is implied, for letting-go of an object implies a certain discipline. Only an effortless and choiceless, I repeat *choiceless* reaction, is the hallmark of liberation.

If I understand you rightly, choosing always means remaining in oneself by a voluntary fixation. So that choosing an object is finally choosing oneself whereas by not choosing one is inserted in the totality of life, that totality where all objects merge into one.

Yes, it is by not choosing that the object chooses itself within us.

It seems comparatively easy to observe my thoughts for only a few seconds, but how can one maintain such a state of observation without making an effort, since it is so easy to identify oneself with one's thoughts?

While you are thinking, you cannot be a witness, since at that moment thought and its object are one. Only afterwards can you know that you have thought. This, you must thoroughly understand. In order to listen to yourself, a certain state of relaxation must settle within you progressively. Hitherto you have tried to reach the mastery of your body by yoga. But when such a tech-

nique, such practices are not carried out under the direction of a master who has an authentic tradition behind him, mastering one's body inevitably means bullying it. Whereas to work on one's body should mean that we rid ourselves of it by elimination. After all, the body is nothing but a notion which has been built up and put together by the mind and therefore the mind should be able to free itself of it. The practice of relaxation which you have undertaken is carried out, not only with the idea of freeing yourself from its bondage, but even more so to achieve a transfiguration of the body itself. Our physical body can be glorified if we cease to think about it in our usual way, and when we are able to feel it, not as a resisting and solid mass, but as something subtle and radiant. This result can be obtained by the frequent repetition of an inner attitude. This standpoint of deep relaxation accompanied by a visualization of the body as being more and more fluid and transparent may finally lead us to a real experience of dematerialization. We then understand that the physical opacity of our body is nothing but the consequence of our former and habitual state of fixation and tenseness.

As long as you hold on to the idea of a solid body, whatever the degree of relaxation you may attain, your body nevertheless remains something heavy and stale. But when you become able to recreate your body, when it has become something as light as air, pure and fluid, when its nature is of the very nature of ether, you will see that you have obtained such a result because your attention has been stripped of any strain. At the present

moment your attention is all strain and tension. And this state of strain has been strengthened by all the disciplines which you have been subjected to, mainly by concentration.

All disciplines are fixations: discipline excludes everything, except the one thing that one wishes to concentrate upon. Thus one establishes a dictatorship over oneself and all understanding is jeopardized. What is absolutely necessary is attention without strain.

. . . and choiceless.

Choiceless.

. . . and without an end result.

What end result could you possibly arrive at, since the object of your search is unknown? All you can say is this: "When I observe myself, I am really forced to admit that every day I am the prisoner of a thousand unsatisfied desires, or desires whose satisfaction brings me no permanent bliss."

So it seems to me that instead of endlessly running from one desire to another, it would be better to stop and examine the true nature of desire.

If this investigation is successful you will penetrate the nature of the true aim of all desire. What any desire really aims at, is a state of non-desire. This non-desire is a state in which we demand absolutely nothing. Thus it is a state of extreme abundance, of fullness.

This fullness is revealed as being bliss and peace. You now know that you are really seeking nothing else but fullness and absolute peace. Now that you have understood the inner nature of your ultimate goal, you perceive that the ultimate goal is, in fact, not a goal, that is to say an end towards which you strive, but that the ultimate state can only be the consequence of relaxing and letting go. Liberation is not to be obtained by collecting and accumulating, but by being rooted in a state of being which is truly ours and in which we live constantly without knowing it. Even if we wished to, we could not live for a single moment outside of this state.

Might inspiration not be an approach to the path of which you speak? Everyone has problems to solve and everyone has inspirations. Some are helped by spiritual practices, and some by art. In such a state, when one is helped, when one is inspired and things come to meet you, there is a complete letting go of strict attention and reasoning (after lengthy striving of course). In other words, one does not live, but something lives within us. There is a contact with something else. A certain state of duality does subsist, but is not this the kind of approach which could help us towards the path?

I said a few minutes ago that objects have no other significance than to point towards consciousness, but there are of course, certain privileged objects which direct us towards the non-dual experience; works of

art are foremost amongst them. When a work of art (whose very nature is to allow itself to be forgotten) causes an inner resonance, the personality disappears, the ego vanishes, and one becomes, for one moment, the very expression of Unity.

I thank you for your answer, but I was thinking of something more definite, that is of artistic creation. At the moment of creation, there is a state. . . I don't like to use this word. . . a mediumistic state, that is to say a state when one is simply a channel between "something else" and that which is going to appear or that which one intends to do. . .

Interrupter. *Yes, one isn't there anymore.*

(Questioner) *Yes one is present! . . . and yet one isn't! . . . There is a giving of oneself, a something which comes to you and urges you to action. Beforehand, of course, one must have worked hard, but at the moment of this gift, this communication between something else which is far away, and that which you are doing, you vanish. The channel is only a channel. May this not be an approach – because after all it is an objective phenomenon, not exactly to be in communication with what one is creating, but with one's self? The approach to knowledge is very difficult – could this not make it easier for some of us? Because, after all, what is knowable is an essence, even if this essence is temporary. If, for instance, we look at a rose, we observe its shape, colour, etc. A quantity of information can be given about the rose, but its very essence nobody knows.*

We know no more than others, we know that it exists, we . . . I mean people who go into things. So perhaps there is in us an essence which may be known in the same way.

Referring to your first remark, you must understand what happens at the moment of the creation of a work of art. By this act, the artist projects himself outwardly. Temporarily the body and mind become perfect instruments of the background and are, as you say, a kind of channel. By means of shape, colour and proportions, they manage to express what is inexpressible.

When you look at a work of architecture whose vertical and horizontal components are in perfect balance, the drive towards the heights and the impression of weight compensate each other to the extent of stripping the building of all its objective mass so that one is carried back, upstream towards the background which is bliss.

Now let us consider your second problem. This we have often analysed. When you think of a rose, you refer to your perception of it and also to your personal way of conceiving it. As you say, you know that such and such a rose has such and such a scent, and its petals are soft to the touch, that it belongs to such and such a botanical species, that it can be made use of in such and such a way; all this is part of the knowledge accumulated by yourself and by men in general, and you superimpose all this on the impression of the rose when you say: "I see a rose". But the real being of the rose, you never see. If you wish to know the rose, it

is enough to be yourself. Because our essence and the essence of the rose are the same, since in reality only one essence exists. When you are established in your essence, you communicate with the essence of every separate thing.

Could you speak to us of this inner springing forth which one may observe when truly listening to oneself?

We habitually stop this springing forth by our impatience. What we should do, is be open to it, without striving to handle it, to treat it as the first step of a deductive line of thought, because by doing so we destroy any possibility of real understanding. The quality, the taste, the fullness of this springing forth depend on the purity of our attitude. It may happen that it arises and that it directs us towards something which our ego refuses. In this case we immediately erase it. Sometimes it comes to us later on, and we must show great patience to give it time to ripen.

If we thus get into the habit of observing our daily upsurges, we will become more and more ready to receive the final one. Once we fully realize that non-dual realization cannot be dealt with by the mind because it is beyond the mind, there arises a supreme springing forth which is different from the others. It is simply caused by the elimination of all false identifications, which directs us to the essential part of our being and leaves us in a state which no analysis can reach, because we then no longer exist in a subject-object rela-

tionship. It does happen that we know such moments, but our inclination is to by-pass them, since the ego tries to grasp them and turn them into an object of enjoyment, thus warping the experience, transforming it into a caricature. The very desire to prolong this experience causes it to vanish.

Could you speak to us about intuition?

The meaning of the word intuition is direct vision, an immediate grasping of an object known by the subject. Intuition therefore belongs to the realm of duality. *Sadhana* develops intuition, deepening it more and more. All indications given on the attitude of listening are also true of intuition.

When thought comes to an end and one finds oneself in the very midst of oneself, can one and should one remain in such a state?

Are you able to put this question to yourself when you are the state? When you are there, you are there and that is all there is to it.

One thing however is important. That is, to recognize in this experience, that we are open to the Self and not on a mental plane.

Here is something which strikes me as being rather significant, and it happens every day, one does one thing while thinking about another. For instance I often happen to put

my keys down somewhere, and the next moment I can't remember where they are, because I was thinking of something else and I was not really present. Is this not a very ordinary example showing that most of the time we are not present to ourselves?

Yes it is. We are always somewhere else, living ahead or behind in time, we long for the future or we regret the past. We are never really here. This flight in time is of great significance. If we turn away from the present, or rather if the present is so often unable to hold our attention, it is because we conceive of it as being a known and registered reality, therefore devoid of interest, or as a disappointing one. Just so long as we have not understood that true bliss is not in objects, but in us, we continue to place our hope in the future and keep racing ahead. We thus live in a state of imbalance, bent upon, and striving endlessly towards, the future.

What we must come to understand is that awareness in the present is the only true starting point and that this starting point is at the same time the point of arrival.