

A black and white photograph of a man in a suit, seen from the back, looking out over a vast, flat landscape under a bright sky. The man is wearing a dark suit jacket, a light-colored shirt, and a dark tie. The landscape is a wide, open plain with some distant hills or mountains on the horizon. The sky is very bright, almost white. The overall mood is contemplative and serious.

THE REAL CRISIS

J KRISHNAMURTI

THE REAL CRISIS

History seems to be the story of man-made catastrophes, and these seem to occur regularly, repeatedly and unfailingly, always taking the world by shock and surprise, disproving all the predictions and promises of the pundits and experts, setting at naught the calculations of the intellect, defying logic and reason, and leaving human beings baffled and helpless. Between one crisis and the next lies what we call our normal life. In that so-called normal life we give our time and energy to everything except serious inquiry and reflection on the purpose of human existence in general and our life in particular. We never ask whether our present way of living itself is not the cause of the next global crisis. The question may never occur to us and, even if it does, we dare not face it.

This is precisely the challenge J. Krishnamurti throws at us—make us aware of a number of fundamental questions, some of which are given here as excerpts from his talks and writings of nearly five decades, covering the years from 1934 to 1985.

*Madras,
22 October 1947;
The Collected
Works, Vol. IV.*

The present world crisis is of an extraordinary nature; there have been probably few such catastrophes in the past. This present crisis is not the usual kind of disaster that occurs so often in the life of man. This chaos is world-wide; it is not Indian or European but stretching out into every corner of the world. Physiologically and psychologically, morally and spiritually, economically and socially, there is disintegration and confusion. We are standing on the edge of a precipice and wrangling over our petty affairs. Few seem to realize the extraordinary character of this world crisis, how profound and vastly disturbing. Some, realizing the confusion, are active in rearranging the pattern of life on the edge of the precipice and, being themselves confused, are only bringing more confusion.

*Madras,
22 October 1947;
The Collected
Works, Vol. IV.*

This catastrophic disaster has not come into being through some action of chance; it has been created by each one of us—by our everyday activities of envy and passion, of greed and the craving for power and domination, of competition and ruthlessness, of sensate and immediate values. We are responsible for this appalling misery and confusion, not another but you and I. Because you are thoughtless, unaware, wrapped up in your ambitions, sensations and their pursuits, wrapped up in those values that are immediately gratifying, you have created this immense, engulfing disaster...You are responsible for this chaos, not any particular group, not any individual, but you.

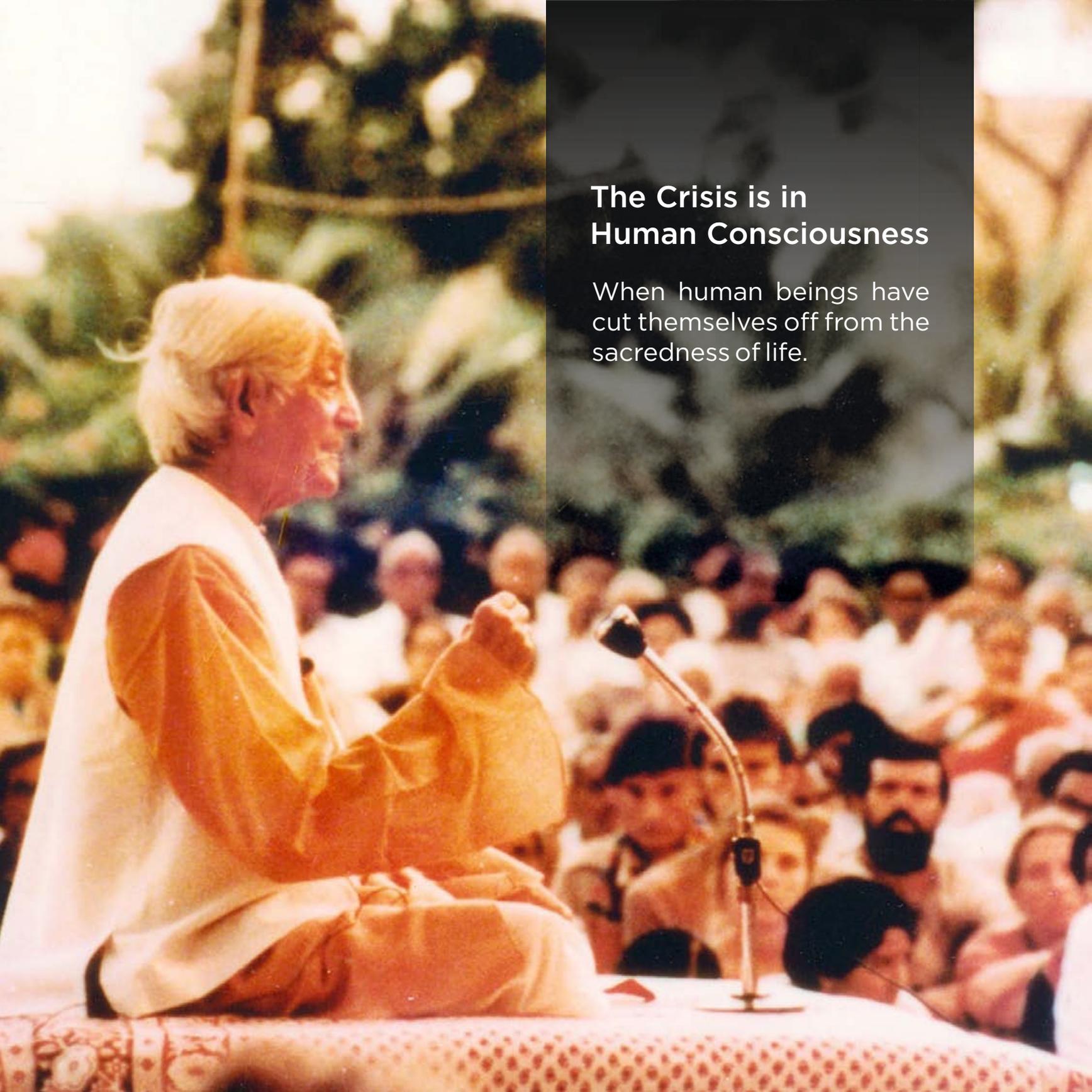
*New Delhi,
14 November 1948;
The Collected
Works, Vol. V.*

Now, what is the modern world? The modern world is made up of technique and efficiency in mass organizations. There is an extraordinary advancement in technology and a maldistribution of mass needs; the means of production are in the hands of a few. There are conflicting nationalities, constantly recurring wars because of sovereign governments. That is the modern world, is it not? There is technical advancement without an equally vital psychological advancement, and so there is a state of unbalance; there are extraordinary scientific achievements, and at the same time human misery, empty hearts, and empty minds....So, that is the modern world, which is yourself. The world is not different from you. Your world, which is yourself, is a world of the cultivated intellect and the empty heart.

THE REAL CRISIS

*Madras,
25 December 1982;
Mind Without
Measure.*

The crisis is there. The crisis is not in the world, it is not the nuclear war, it is not the terrible divisions and the brutality that is going on. The crisis is in our consciousness, the crisis is what we are, what we have become.



The Crisis is in Human Consciousness

When human beings have
cut themselves off from the
sacredness of life.

*Bombay,
28 January 1968;
Meeting Life.*

Why has man, who has lived for thousands and thousands of years, come to such misery and conflict?....If you put aside the easy explanations of over-population, lack of morality—which goes with technological knowledge and this lack of direct communication—what then is the fundamental reason, the fundamental cause of this misery? Why is it that in a country like this that has had the tradition of goodness, kindness, of not killing, of not being brutal....why is it and whence is it that something has gone totally wrong?

*Madras,
26 October 1947;
The Collected
Works, Vol. IV.*

Because in the ancient days there were a group of people who were free from ambition and authority, from the bondages of greed and ill will, it helped to guide society away from spiritual and moral degradation. The larger the group, the greater the security of the society, of the State and, for this reason, only one or two countries, like India, have survived. Because there are very few people who are not caught up in the turmoil of the world, you are in an extraordinary crisis.

*Bombay,
28 January 1978.*

There is the sorrow of disease, there is the sorrow that man feels in complete isolation. There is the sorrow of poverty when you see all these poor, ignorant, dirty, hopeless people. There is sorrow when you see all the animals of the world being killed, destroyed, butchered in laboratories.

25 February 1983;
*Krishnamurti
to Himself.*

It is odd that we have so little relationship with nature. We never seem to have a feeling for all the living things on the earth. If we could establish a deep, abiding relationship with nature, we would never kill an animal for our appetite; we would never harm, vivisect a monkey, a dog, a guinea pig for our benefit. We would find other ways to heal our wounds, heal our bodies. But the healing of the mind is something totally different. That healing gradually takes place if you are with nature.

*The Whole
Movement of
Life is Learning:
Letters to the
Schools, Ch. 67.*

When we lose contact with nature, we lose contact with each other. When you lose contact with the birds, the shy and timid quail, then you lose contact with your child and the person across the street. When you kill an animal to eat, you are also cultivating insensitivity which will kill that man across the border. When you lose contact with the enormous movement of life, you lose all relationship. Then you—the ego with all its fanciful urges, demands, and pursuits—become all-important, and the gulf between you and the world widens in endless conflicts.

*The Whole
Movement of
Life is Learning:
Letters to the
Schools, Ch. 70.*

When you look around you, not so much in the human world as in nature, in the heavens, you see an extraordinary sense of order, balance, and harmony. Every tree and flower has its own order, its own beauty; every hilltop and every valley has a sense of its own rhythm and stability. Though man tries to control the rivers and pollutes their waters, they have their own flow, their own far-reaching movement. Apart from man, in the seas, in the air and the vast expanse of the heavens there is an extraordinary sense of purity and orderly existence. Though the fox kills the chicken, and the bigger animals live on the little animals, what appears to be cruelty is a design of order in this universe, except for man. When man doesn't interfere, there is great beauty of balance and harmony.



**THE REAL
CRISIS**

*IIT-Bombay,
7 February 1984;
Why are You
being Educated?*

So, what is the meaning of all this existence? You may not want to look at it, you may want to avoid it....You give about twenty or thirty years to acquiring knowledge of physics, linguistics, biology, sociology, philosophy, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and so on. You give years and years to it, and you don't give one day or even one hour to find out for yourself what you are and why you are living like this.

*Bombay,
10 February 1985;
That Benediction
is Where You are.*

Are we wasting our lives? By that word wasting we mean dissipating our energy in various ways, dissipating it in specialized professions. Are we wasting our whole existence, our life? If you are rich, you may say, 'Yes, I have accumulated a lot of money, it has been a great pleasure.' Or if you have a certain talent, that talent is a danger to a religious life. Talent is a gift, a faculty, an aptitude in a particular direction, which is specialization. Specialization is a fragmentary process. So you must ask yourself whether you are wasting your life. You may be rich, you may have all kinds of faculties, you may be a specialist, a great scientist or a businessman, but at the end of your life has all that been a waste?

*Saanen,
22 July, 1973*

Your culture says: 'Why bother about what the meaning of life is; just live, put up with the ugliness, the beastly existence, the sorrow, the pain, the anxiety, the pleasures, the fears, the utter boredom, the loneliness; all that is part of your life. You cannot go beyond it; therefore enjoy, make pleasure the main thing of your life.'

And that is what you are doing.

*The Whole
Movement of Life
is Learning:
Letters to Schools,
Ch 28.*

All over the world, human beings are degenerating to a greater or lesser extent. When pleasure, personal or collective, becomes the dominant interest in life—the pleasure of sex, the pleasure of asserting one’s own will, the pleasure of excitement, the pleasure of self-interest, the pleasure of power and status, the insistent demand to have one’s own pleasure fulfilled—there is degeneration. When human relationships become casual, based on pleasure, there is degeneration. When responsibility has totally lost its meaning, when there is no care for another or for the earth and the things of the sea, this disregard of heaven and earth is another form of degeneration. When there is hypocrisy in high places, when there is dishonesty in commerce, when lies are part of everyday speech, when there is the tyranny of the few, when only things predominate, there is the betrayal of all life. Then killing becomes the only language of life. When love is taken as pleasure, then human beings have cut themselves off from beauty and the sacredness of life....

The greater the pleasure, the greater is the strengthening of the ‘me’. When there is pursuit of pleasure, human beings are exploiting each other. When pleasure becomes dominant in our lives, relationship is exploited for this purpose, and so there is no actual relationship with another. Then relationship becomes merchandise. The urge for fulfilment is based on pleasure, and when that pleasure is denied or has not found means of expression, then there is anger, cynicism, hatred or bitterness. This incessant pursuit of pleasure is actually insanity.

*Bombay,
15 February 1948;
The Collected
Works, Vol. IV.*

Why is man caught in sensate pleasure?...It has become a burning issue because it is stimulated by every possible means in modern society. Newspapers, cinema, and magazines stimulate eroticism. Advertisements, to attract your attention, use the picture of a woman. Outward and inward stimulation is being encouraged, is sedulously cultivated. The present society is essentially the outcome of sensate values. Things, power, position, name, and class have become of vital significance. Sensory values have become predominantly significant in your lives....Your lives are hollow, empty, a routine of earning money, playing cards, going to the cinema, and the reading of books.

*Varanasi,
22 January 1954;
Leaving School,
Entering Life.*

The rich want to forget themselves in night-clubs, in amusements, in cars, in travelling. The clever ones want to forget themselves, so they begin to invent, to have extraordinary beliefs. The stupid ones want to forget themselves, and so they follow people, they have gurus who tell them what to do. The ambitious ones also want to forget themselves in doing something. So all of us, as we mature, as we grow older, want to forget ourselves.

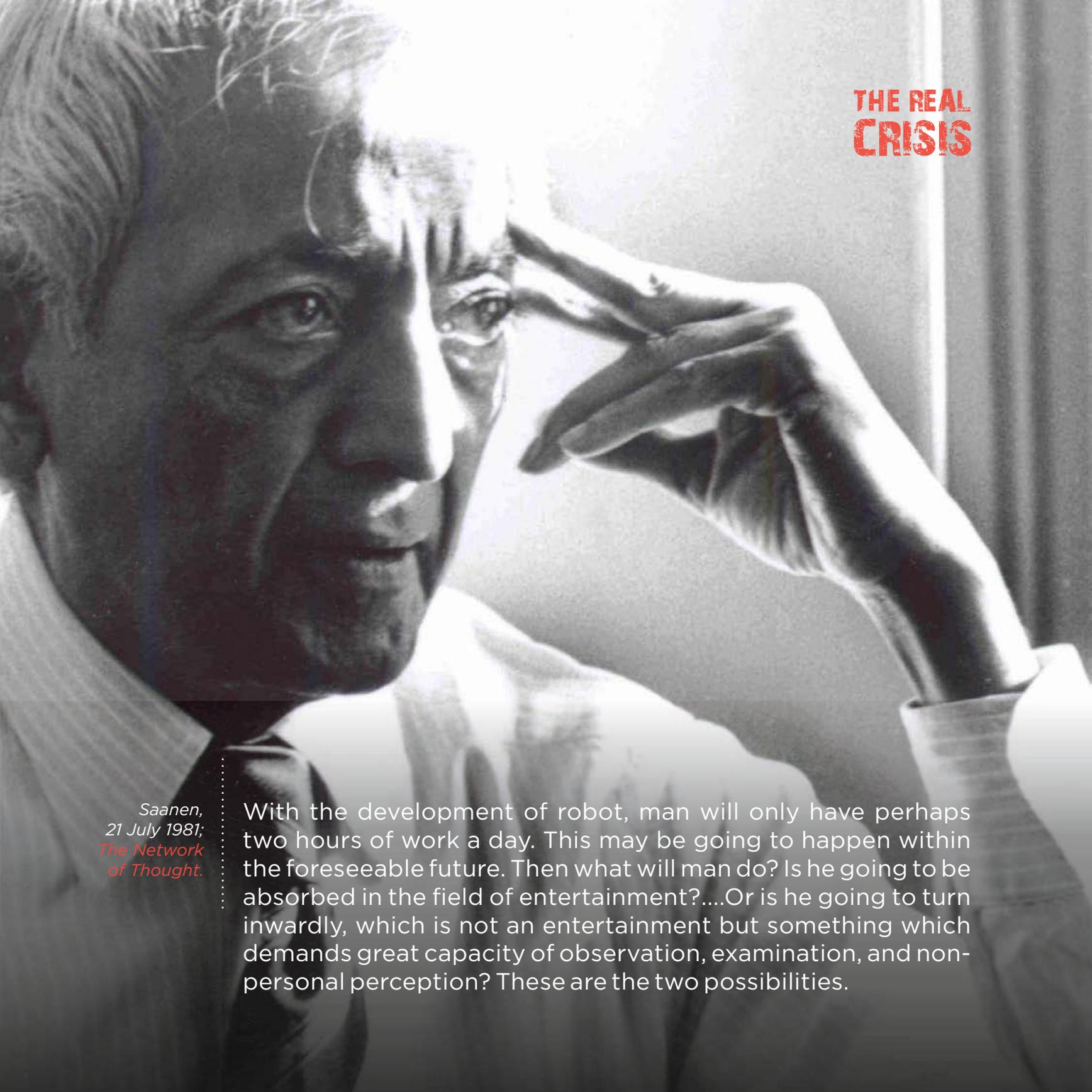
*Commentaries
on Living, Ch:3*

A restless mind must have a changing variety of expressions and actions. It must be filled or occupied; it must have ever-increasing sensations, passing interests; and gossip contains all these elements. Concern over the affairs of others seems to occupy most people. This concern shows itself in the reading of innumerable magazines and newspapers with their gossip columns, their accounts of murder, divorces, and so on. Thus we become more and more externalized and inwardly empty. The more externalized we are, the more sensations and distractions there must be. Modern existence encourages this superficial activity and distraction.

*Krishnamurti
to Himself,
18 March, 1983*

We don't seem to pay much attention to the future. You see on television endless entertainment from morning until late in the night. The children are entertained. The commercials all sustain the feeling that you are being entertained. And this is happening practically all over the world. What will be the future of these children? There is the entertainment of sport—thirty, forty thousand people watching a few people in the arena and shouting themselves hoarse....Watching all this in different parts of the world, watching the mind being occupied with amusement, entertainment, sport, if one is in any way concerned one must inevitably ask what the future is. More of the same in different forms? A variety of amusements?....

When the entertainment industry takes over, as it is gradually doing now, when the young people, the students, the children, are constantly instigated to pleasure, to fancy, to romantic sensuality, the words restraint and austerity are pushed away, never even given a thought....You probably won't even listen to what the implications of austerity are. When you have been brought up from childhood to amuse yourself and to escape from yourself through entertainment, and when most of the psychologists say that you must express everything you feel and that any form of holding back or restraint is detrimental, leading to various forms of neuroticism, you naturally enter more and more into the world of sport, amusement, entertainment, all helping you to escape from what you are.



**THE REAL
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*Saanen,
21 July 1981;
The Network
of Thought.*

With the development of robot, man will only have perhaps two hours of work a day. This may be going to happen within the foreseeable future. Then what will man do? Is he going to be absorbed in the field of entertainment?....Or is he going to turn inwardly, which is not an entertainment but something which demands great capacity of observation, examination, and non-personal perception? These are the two possibilities.

*The World
Within,
Ch:75.*

You are encased in your own capacities and gifts, and they are dangerous friends. They become the end in themselves and lead to much misery and sorrow. Your food, your clothes, your postures, and your pleasures are making you weary and dull; your mind is becoming insensitive and losing its quickness of understanding....If you become aware of the many activities of the superficial mind, watch its chatterings, its dances, its reasons, conclusions, through this awareness there comes peace and clarity.

Poona,
19 September 1948;
*The Collected
Works, Vol. V.*

Therefore the important thing...is self-knowledge. Without understanding oneself, there cannot be order in the world; without exploring the whole process of thought, feeling, and action in oneself, there cannot possibly be world peace, order, and security. Therefore the study of oneself is of primary importance, and it is not a process of escape.

This study of oneself is not mere inaction. On the contrary, it requires an extraordinary awareness in everything that one does, an awareness in which there is no judgement, no condemnation or blame. This awareness of the total process of oneself as one lives in daily life is not narrowing, but ever-expanding, ever-clarifying; and out of this awareness comes order, first in oneself and then externally in one's relationships.

*Montevideo,
26 June 1935;
The Collected
Works, Vol. II.*

.....
If you are not suffering, if you are not in conflict, if there is no problem, no crisis in your life, then there is very little to be said. That is, if you are asleep, then the action of life must first awaken you. But what happens generally when you begin to suffer? You immediately seek a remedy that will ease your suffering. So gradually in your search for comfort, you again put yourself to sleep through your own effort...When the mind is awakened through a shock, which you call suffering, that is the true moment to inquire into the cause of suffering, without seeking comfort.

*Ojai,
18 June 1934;
The Collected
Works, Vol. II.*

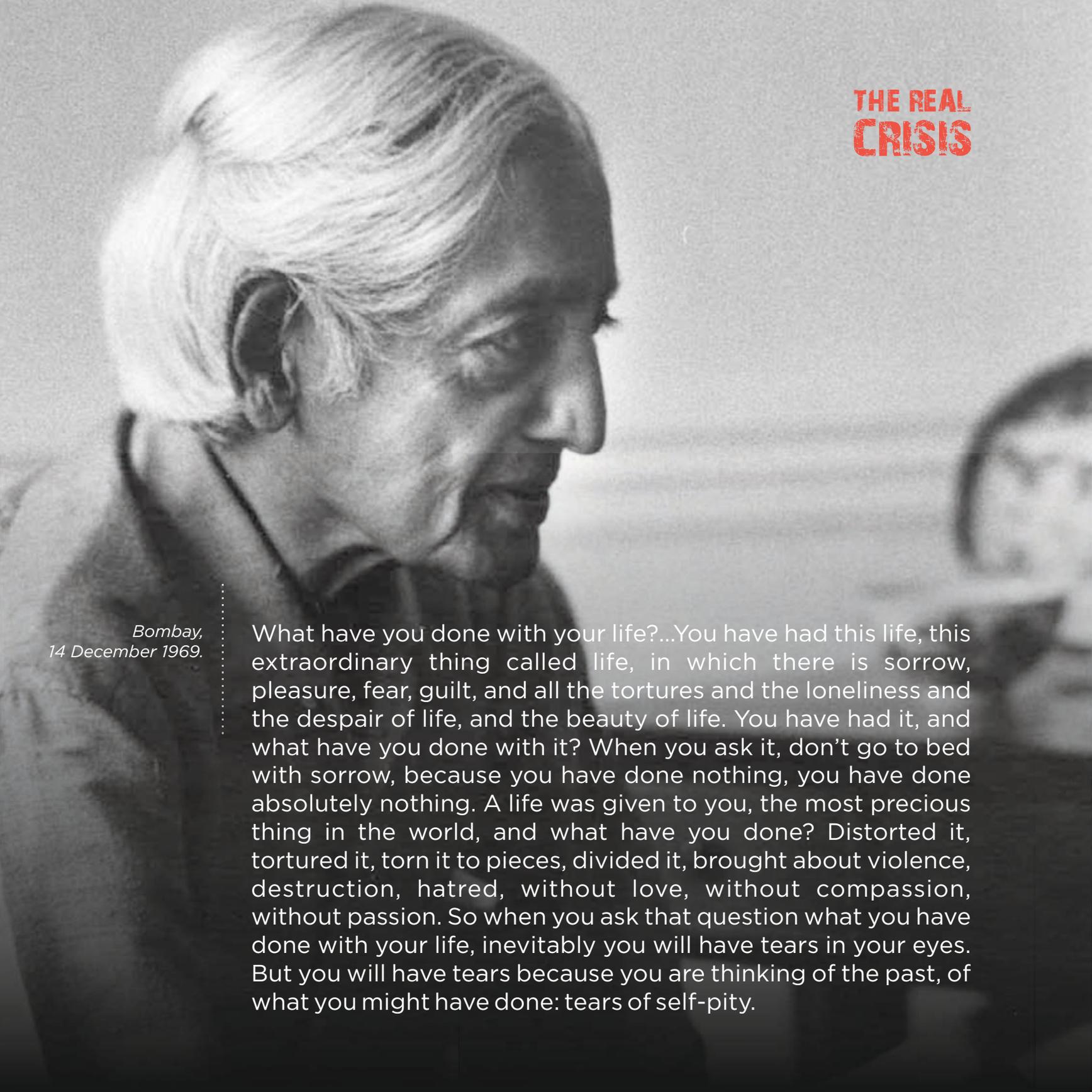
If you are unconscious of the conflict, that is, the battle that is taking place between the self and the environment, if you are unconscious of that battle, then why do you seek further remedies? Remain unconscious. Let the conditions themselves produce the necessary conflict without your rushing after, invoking artificially, falsely, a conflict which does not exist in your mind and heart. And you create artificially a conflict because you are afraid that you are missing something. Life will not miss you.

*Varanasi,
16 December 1952;
The Collected
Works, Vol. VII.*

When you close the doors and windows of the house and live inside, you feel safe, secure, unmolested. But life is not like that. Life is constantly knocking on the door, trying to push the windows open all the time so that you may see more, but if there is fear and you close all the windows, the knocking grows louder. So the more outward securities you cling to, the more life comes and pushes you.

*Madras,
29 December 1979;
The Seed of a
Million Years.*

So, what will make you change? A crisis? A knock on the head? Sorrow? Tears? All that has happened—crisis after crisis. You have shed tears endlessly, and nothing seems to change you because you are relying on somebody else to do the job....Nobody says, 'I am going to find out.'



**THE REAL
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*Bombay,
14 December 1969.*

What have you done with your life?...You have had this life, this extraordinary thing called life, in which there is sorrow, pleasure, fear, guilt, and all the tortures and the loneliness and the despair of life, and the beauty of life. You have had it, and what have you done with it? When you ask it, don't go to bed with sorrow, because you have done nothing, you have done absolutely nothing. A life was given to you, the most precious thing in the world, and what have you done? Distorted it, tortured it, torn it to pieces, divided it, brought about violence, destruction, hatred, without love, without compassion, without passion. So when you ask that question what you have done with your life, inevitably you will have tears in your eyes. But you will have tears because you are thinking of the past, of what you might have done: tears of self-pity.

*Ojai,
17 June 1945;
The Collected
Works, Vol. IV.*

Cheer and happiness are not ends in themselves; they are, as courage and hope, incidents in the search of something that is an end in itself. It is this end that must be sought after patiently and diligently, and the only through its discovery will our turmoil and pain cease. The journey towards its discovery lies through oneself; every other journey is a distraction leading to ignorance and illusion. The journey within oneself must be undertaken not for a result, not to solve conflict and sorrow; for the search itself is devotion, inspiration.

*Think on
These Things,
Ch:26.*

We are one humanity; the earth is ours to share, and with loving care it will produce food, clothing, and shelter for us all. So the function of education is not merely to prepare you to pass a few examinations, but to help you understand this whole problem of living....It is also our problem to find out what God is because that is the very foundation of our life. A house cannot stand for long without a proper foundation, and all the cunning inventions of man will be meaningless if we are not seeking out what is God or truth.

*Think on
These Things,
Ch:17.*

You can see that all this work leads to destruction and misery, to chaos and despair. Great luxuries exist side by side with extreme poverty, disease and starvation, with refrigerators and jet planes. All this is the work of man, and when you see it, don't you ask yourself, 'Is that all? Is there not something else which is the true work of man?' If we can find out what is the true work of man, then jet planes, washing machines, bridges, hostels will all have an entirely different meaning. But without finding out what is the true work of man, merely to indulge in reforms, in reshaping what man has already done, will lead nowhere.

So, what is the true work of man? Surely the true work of man is to discover truth, God; it is to love and not to be caught in his own self-enclosing activities. In the very discovery of what is true, there is love, and that love in man's relationship with man will create a different civilization, a new world.

*Think on
These Things,
Ch:11.*

The urge to find out what truth is, what God is, is the only real urge, and all other urges are subsidiary. When you throw a stone into still water, it makes expanding circles. The expanding circles are the subsidiary movements, the social reactions, but the real movement is at the centre, which is the movement to find happiness, God, truth; and you cannot find it as long as you are caught in fear, held by a threat. From the moment there is the arising of threat and fear, culture declines.

That is why it is very important, while you are young, not to become conditioned, not to be held in by fear of your parents, of society, so that there is in you this timeless movement to discover what is truth. The men who seek out what is truth, what is God—only such men can create a new civilization, a new culture.

*Think on
These Things,
Ch:27.*

The truly religious person is not concerned with reform, he is not concerned with merely producing a change in the social order; on the contrary, he is seeking what is true, and that very search has a transforming effect on society. That is why education must be principally concerned with helping the student to seek out truth or God, and not merely preparing him to fit into the pattern of a given society.

*Saanen,
3 August 1975.*

One has to find that which is eternally, incorruptibly sacred. And that can come only when there is compassion; which means when you have understood the whole significance of suffering—suffering not only of yourself, but the suffering of the world. The suffering of the world is truth; it is there. It is not a sentimental, romantic fluttering of thought. It is actually there, as in us. And to live with that suffering, go to its very end without escaping from it. When you don't escape, you have tremendous energy to meet it. Then only you go beyond it....Compassion comes only when you have understood the whole meaning of suffering, and no longer suffer. It is only the compassionate mind that can meditate and find that which is eternally sacred.

*Think on
These Things,
Ch:17.*

The search for God, for truth, the feeling of being completely good—not the cultivation of goodness, of humility, but the seeking out of something beyond the inventions and tricks of the mind, which means having a feeling for that something, living in it, being it—that is true religion. But you can do that only when you leave the pool you have dug for yourself and go out into the river of life. Then life has an astonishing way of taking care of you because then there is no taking care on your part. Life carries you where it will because you are part of itself; then there is no problem of security, of what people say or don't say, and that is the beauty of life.

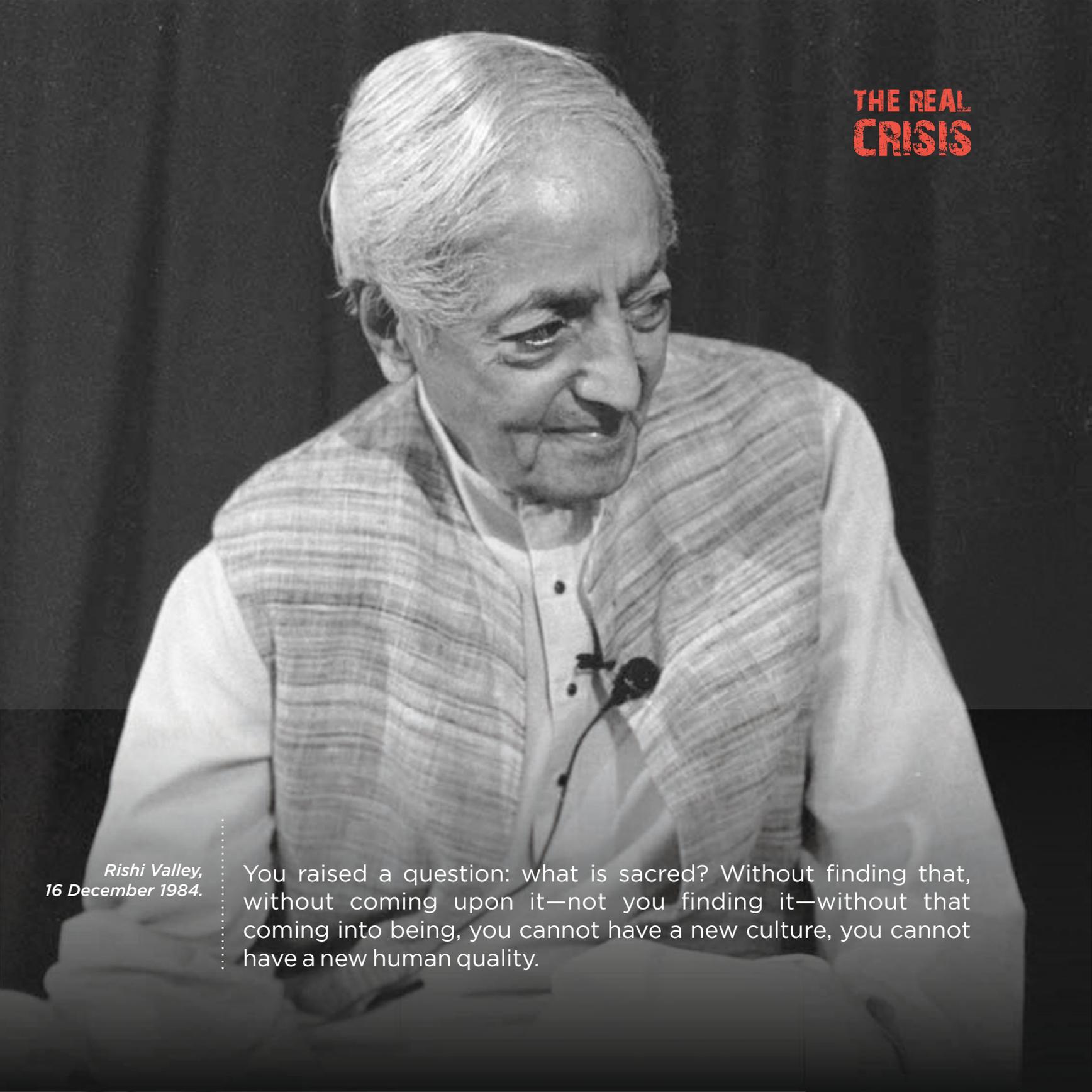
*The World Within,
Ch.76.*

In seeking the Real, bread will be supplied; but if we seek only bread, then even that will be destroyed. Bread is not the ultimate value; when we make of it into the ultimate, there is disaster, there is murder, there is starvation.

Through the transient seek the eternal. There is no path to it, for it is the ever-present.

*The World Within,
Ch:19.*

There is only Reality, the supreme without a second. There is only one humanity and one righteousness, and the way to its realization does not lie through any other path, through any other person save through yourself. Seek your own deliverance, and then you will deliver the world from its confusion and conflict, its sorrow and antagonism.



**THE REAL
CRISIS**

*Rishi Valley,
16 December 1984.*

You raised a question: what is sacred? Without finding that, without coming upon it—not you finding it—without that coming into being, you cannot have a new culture, you cannot have a new human quality.

*Madras,
22 October 1947;
The Collected
Works, Vol. IV.*

You must be your own light....There is no hope in the things made by the hand or by the mind. We are not escaping; we are pointing out that any activity on the edge of the precipice can only precipitate the fall, and there is safety and happiness only away from the precipice. The few who realize this must form centres of enlightenment, away from the abyss. There is a way out of our present crisis and from all human problems—a way that is not an escape, a way that leads to eternal bliss.



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