

The Origin of Fear

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How does fear come about-fear of tomorrow, fear of losing a job, fear of death, fear of falling ill, fear of pain? Fear implies a process of thought about the future or about the past. I am afraid of tomorrow, of what might happen. I am afraid of death; it is at a distance still, but I am afraid of it. Now, what brings about fear? Fear always exists in relation to something. Otherwise there is no fear. So one is afraid of tomorrow or of what has been or what will be. What has brought fear? Isn't it thought?

So thought breeds fear. I think about my losing a job or I might lose a job, and thought creates the fear. So thought always projects itself in time, because thought is time. I think about the illness I have had and I do not like the pain, and I am frightened that the pain might return again. I have had an experience of pain; thinking about it and not wanting it create fear.

Fear is very closely related to pleasure. Most of us are guided by pleasure. To us, like the animals, pleasure is of the highest importance, and pleasure is part of thought. By thinking about something that has given me pleasure, that pleasure is increased. Isn't it? Have you not noticed all this? You have had an experience of pleasure-of a beautiful sunset or of sex-and you think about it. The thinking about it increases pleasure, as thinking about what you have had as pain brings fear. So thought creates pleasure and fear. Doesn't it? So thought is responsible for the demand for, and the continuation of, pleasure; and thought is also responsible for engendering fear, bringing about fear.

One sees this; this is an actual experimental fact. Then one asks oneself, "Is it possible not to think about pleasure or pain? Is it possible to think only when thought is demanded, but not otherwise?" Sir, when you function in an office, when you are working at a job, thought is necessary; otherwise, you could not do anything. When you speak, when you write, when you talk, when you go to the office, thought is necessary. There, it must function precisely, impersonally. There, thought must not be guided by inclination, a tendency. There, thought is necessary. But is thought necessary in any other field of action? Please follow this.

For us thought is very important; that is the only instrument we have. Thought is the response of memory which has been accumulated through experience, through knowledge, through tradition; and memory is the result of time, inherited from the animal. And with this background we react. This reaction is thinking. Thought is essential at certain levels. But when thought projects itself as the future and the past psychologically, then thought creates fear as well as pleasure; and in this process the mind is made dull and, therefore, inaction is inevitable. Sir, fear, as we said, is brought about by thought-thinking about losing my job, thinking my wife might run away with somebody, thinking about death, thinking about what has been, and so on. Can thought stop thinking about the past psychologically, self-protectively, or about the future?

Dependence on things, on people, or on ideas breeds fear; dependence arises from ignorance, from the lack of self-knowledge, from inward poverty; fear causes uncertainty of mind-heart, preventing communication and understanding. Through self-awareness we begin to discover and so comprehend the cause of fear, not only the superficial but the deep causal and accumulative

fears. Fear is both inborn and acquired; it is related to the past, and to free thought-feeling from it, the past must be comprehended through the present. The past is ever wanting to give birth to the present which becomes the identifying memory of the 'me' and the 'mine', the 'I'.

When you give total and complete attention, there is no observer at all. And it is the observer that breeds fear because the observer is the center of thought; it is the 'me', the 'I', the self, the ego; the observer is the censor. When there is no thought, there is no observer. That state is not a blank state. That demands a great deal of inquiry-never accepting anything.

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